



THE **COSTCO** **CONNECTION**

December 2013 • Volume 28 • Number 12

A lifestyle magazine for Costco members

All *in the* family

Roots run deep for
family-owned wineries

38

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THE COSTCO CONNECTION[®]

Welcome to **The Costco Connection** *Online Edition and Newsstand Edition*

Digital editions of *The Costco Connection* and other Costco publications are available in the *Online Edition* and in the *Newsstand Edition* available for mobile devices.

The *Online Edition* opens to the current issue, with back issues found under the Back Issue tab and "The Costco Way" cookbooks under the Resources tab.

The *Newsstand Edition* opens to the current issue in a library populated with a mix of back issues and "The Costco Way" cookbooks.

Reader Survey: Complete a brief survey and enter a drawing for a Costco Cash card. Our reader survey is open to all *Connection* readers looking to weigh in on our content or on Costco in general; or email your comments anytime directly to connection@costco.com.

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- **Costco Beer, Wine and Spirits Locator**
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- **Costco Business Centers Locator**
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Have you downloaded the free **Costco Connection Newsstand Edition**? It's a tablet-friendly way to take *The Connection* with you when on the go, and delivers the current issue as well as access to dozens of back issues and cookbooks. It's available for tablets and smartphones at the Apple and Google Play app stores.



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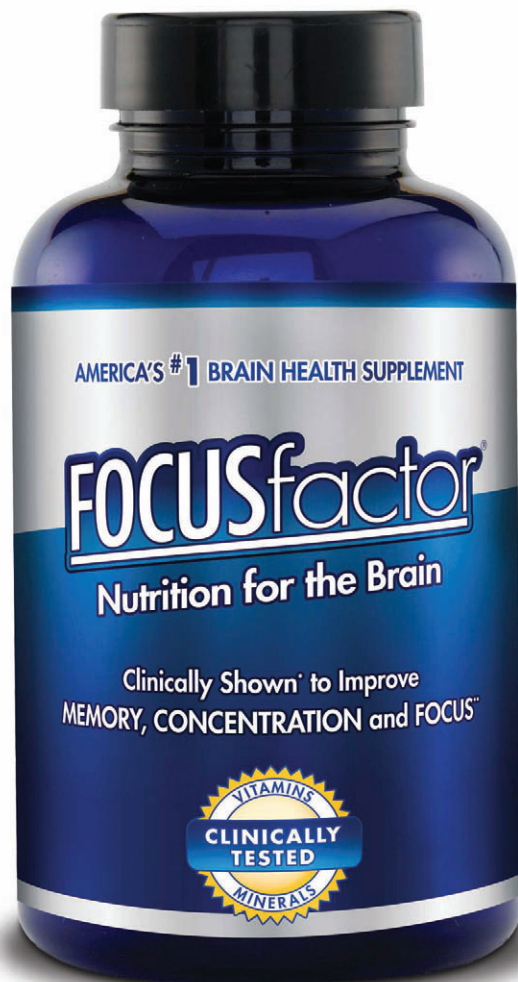


Swiss Blue Topaz



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*Savings data represents information provided by Costco members who became new auto policyholders with Ameriprise Auto & Home Insurance and reported annual savings between 2/1/13 and 7/31/13. Individual savings and experience may vary based upon a variety of factors including, but not limited to, driving experience and type of automobile insured.

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These family wineries pour their heart and soul into every bottle of premium wines

BY ANNETTE ALVAREZ-PETERS

SHUTTERSTOCK

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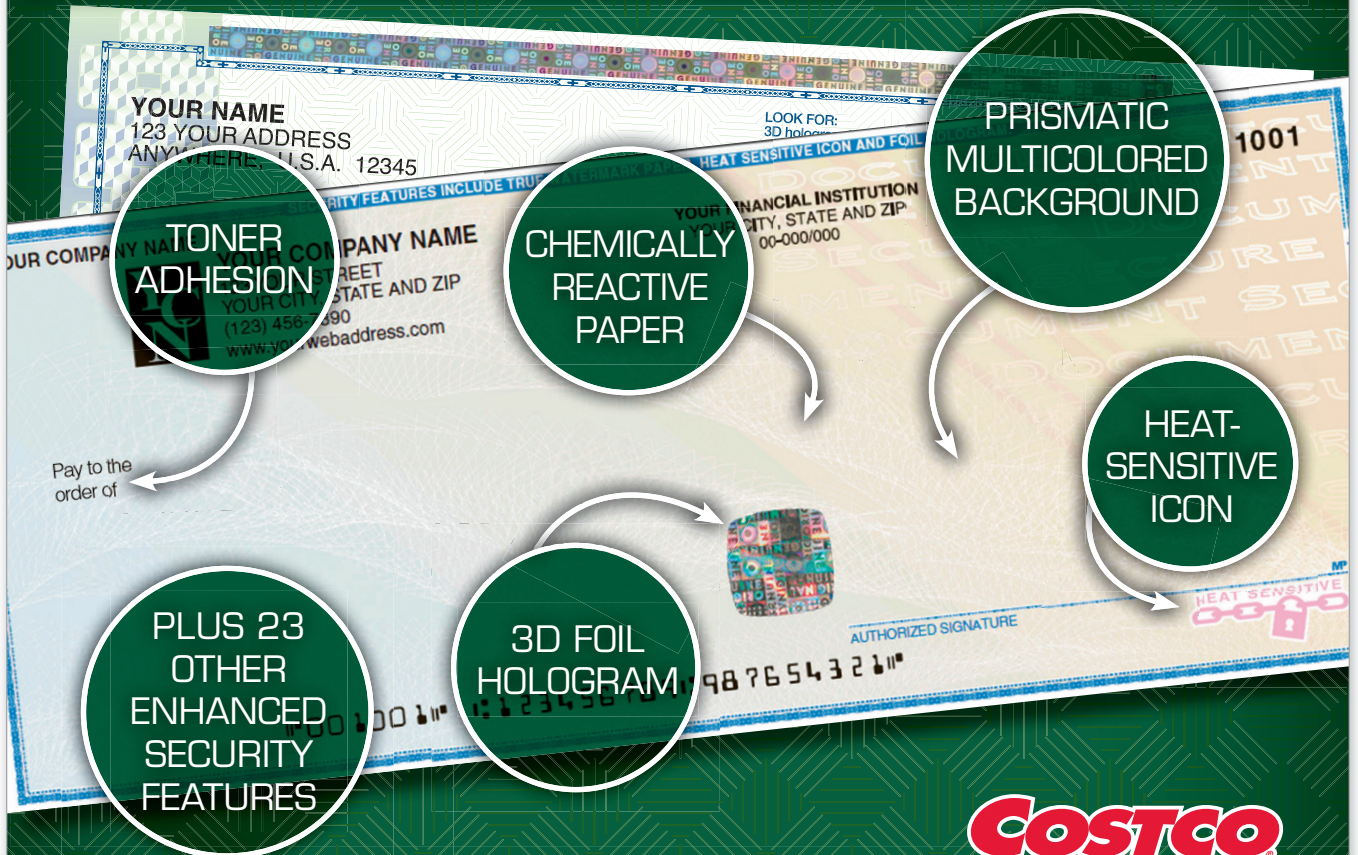
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*Based on study data provided by JavelinStrategy.com

Costco Services: Business & Personal Checks

3 ways to interact with *The Costco Connection*

1. Engage with our interactive print issue

This option provides a way to view digital enhancements directly from the print edition through a technology known as digital watermarking.

Look for the **mobile icon** (right) or other indicators that will direct you to additional content, such as videos, surveys, giveaways and more.



Ads with digital enhancements display a **universal play** button or a 2D bar code (right).



Instructions

1. **Download** the newest version of the free Costco app from the iTunes or Google Play app stores.
2. **Launch** the app, swipe the menu screen to the left and select the Code Scanner.
3. **Hold** your device 4 to 6 inches above the watermarked image or icon and let your camera focus.
4. **Wait** for the sound—the digital content will appear.

2. Browse the Online Edition

If you have a computer with an Internet connection, you can view *The Connection's Online Edition* on Costco.com by clicking "The Costco Connection."

Those reading the print edition can scan watermarked pages with the Costco app. Readers using the digital editions of the magazine can click on the icons and play buttons.

3. Take *The Connection* on the go

For tablets and smartphones, download *The Costco Connection Newsstand Edition* from the iTunes or Google Play app stores.

DIGITAL CONTENT

Readers will find dozens of digital enhancements throughout this magazine, including:

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- Mesothelioma, page 57**
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from the publisher's desk

Ginnie Roeglin

AS WALLY AMOS SAYS on page 13, "Everything must change." Fall becomes winter, winter turns to spring and the cycle continues.

Our publishing staff has also been going through some changes. In January 2013, Anita Thompson left for a well-deserved retirement after 22 years as editorial director for *The Costco Connection*. And just a few weeks ago, Dave Fuller, *The Connection's* longtime editor, also retired. For 24 years, Dave led the editorial, advertising, production and circulation departments of our magazines and cookbooks. We thank Dave for his years of service and his dedication to quality and excellence. We will miss him and wish him a happy retirement.

This month, we welcome Tim Talevich (below) to his new position as editorial director. Tim started as a reporter for *The Connection* in 1994. He went on to become managing editor for our U.S. and international magazines as well as eight Costco cookbooks. He has proved capable of stepping up to the challenge of overseeing a magazine with a circulation of more than 8.6 million members per month.

Your challenge this month may be to pick among all the amazing products and gift ideas that Costco buyers have made available for this holiday season.

Food and wine are highlights at this time of year, so this issue includes articles about special wines in our cover story (page 38), a rare 40-year-old Scotch (page 43), wine cruise vacations (page 83) and Choice and Prime cuts of beef from Costco's high-grade meat program as the centerpiece of your holiday meal (page 92, with recipes on page 94).

On the tech side, you will find great values on smart TVs, sound bars, cameras and other electronics ("Instant savings on electronics," beginning after page 69), as well as help from Costco's free Concierge Service and extra protection through the SquareTrade warranty program (page 75).

Whatever your decision, you have our warmest wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah from all of us at Costco! ☑



Ginnie Roeglin is Senior Vice President, E-Commerce and Publishing, and Publisher of *The Costco Connection*.



Tim Talevich is Editorial Director of *The Costco Connection*.

from the editor's desk

Tim Talevich

IN THE SPIRIT of full disclosure, thoughts of samples did play a role in getting family wineries on our list of possible cover stories for this month's issue. Who wouldn't be interested in sipping a *tête de cuvée* Champagne or a Super Tuscan from Italy—in the name of research, of course. However, the truth is, this subject stands on its own merits, tastings or not (there haven't been any yet, at least not in the editorial department).

Family-owned wineries are story worthy not only because many of us love wine itself—including a bottle's origins, tasting notes, ratings and so on—but because they are fascinating businesses, with all the classic elements: passion for the product, risks taken, rises and falls, and ultimately success. In this case, as our wine buyer Annette Alvarez-Peters points out in her story, it's all the more compelling because these people put their names on what they make.

The biggest challenge for Annette was narrowing the list to fit in our limited space. With help from her buying team in our corporate office and in our eight regional U.S. offices, she chose wineries that had earned distinction for having a vision for their wines, thinking outside the bottle and making it all work through an outstanding commitment to detail. And, pardon the wine pun, the five wineries profiled here have legs in that they have stayed around for decades, and even centuries.

Costco treats wine as one of the "treasure hunt" items in our warehouses. You won't find an enormous selection of bottles, as you would in a wine specialty shop. Our wine buyers select a representative sample of excellent wines from around the world, and offer them at great prices. I like picking up a bottle when I'm in the warehouse and trying something new. And this time of year, a bottle of wine makes a perfect hostess gift, or present for a special friend. Now I'll pay a little more attention to those names on the label. ☑



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MEDIA BAKERY

Debate goes on

In response to the November Debate, "Should the DUI limit be lowered?"

YES. You shouldn't drive *at all* if you have [consumed] any controlled substance.

*Sandra Delaney
Aloha, Oregon*

NO. A blood alcohol limit of 0.05 percent (or any other number) will not limit drinking and driving irresponsibly.

*Russell Barry
Mesa, Arizona*

YES. Having been a victim of a five-time convicted drunk driver, [I believe] a new, lower limit would catch more of them.

*Tara Jackson
Wayne, Michigan*

NO. This will incur extra costs and drain resources. Most accidents occur at the current higher level.

*Kathy McClure
Queen Creek, Arizona*

Member comments

Animals as healers

"Healing heroes" [November 2013] was a great article. Animals are very sensitive to the needs of people.

Our disabled son, Brad, had wonderful experiences with animals. When he was in high school he participated in a therapeutic horse program and was able to compete at the state and national levels. Our youngest son and his family had the most hyper golden retriever, yet he would come put his head on Brad's lap in the wheelchair and would lie down at his feet, never moving, every time we visited. That dog's ashes are buried with our son.

I just had to share my thoughts after reading the article.

*Linda A. Rogers
Park City, Utah*

Chocolate and children

I appreciated the article on how Costco obtains its chocolate ["Cocoa channels," October 2013] but was disappointed that it didn't address the important issue of child slavery. Does Costco take care to ensure that it is not buying chocolate from farms that use child slave labor? As important as sustainable farming is, I don't really care about it if children are being kidnapped and enslaved in order to satisfy my sweet tooth.

*Cheri Blomquist
Littleton, Colorado*

We share your desire to prevent child/slave labor. Our Costco Code of Conduct specifically prohibits it, our farmer training programs address the issue specifically, and we have annual audits by independent third parties to follow up. We are also working with ANADAR, the Ivorian government agency that conducts child labor sensitivity training.—Sheri Flies, AGMM,

Costco global sourcing

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Connection comments from the Internet

"Great article about gift baskets ["Thinking inside the basket," November 2013] with a quote about a wonderful peer Debbie [Quintana]."

Tweeted by Your Perfect Gift @sookegiftbasket

"Another terrific article in *The Costco Connection*: "Healing Heroes—Animals of all kinds provide therapeutic relief" [November 2013]."

Tweeted by FredCo AnimalControl @FCACMD

"Social media advice in the Costco magazine? Not what I expected, but some good info on photography in social media ["Engaging images," September 2013]."

Tweeted by Tracey Mumford @AmaazingMumford

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DID YOU KNOW that Costco has a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/Costco)? It's another great place to find out what's happening at Costco locations, learn about featured items and services, find recipes and share comments with other Costco members.

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Advertising and products in *The Connection*

- All ads indicate whether a product is available in the warehouse, on Costco.com or both.
- Products are scheduled to be available during *The Connection's* month of publication and are noted as in warehouse "early in month" (1st to 10th), "mid-month" (11th to 21st) or "late in month" (22nd to 31st).
- Shop early in the month for the best selection of seasonal items.
- Costco.com carries few of the products available at the warehouses, but offers 3,500 additional items, including line extensions and supplemental products.
- Prices are usually not listed because they have not been finalized at the time of printing and may vary from one part of the country to another due to shipping costs. We hope members know to check Costco first when comparison shopping.
- To keep prices low, Costco does not offer a telephone service allowing members to call in for prices or product availability.

Have something to say?

Readers are encouraged to submit letters to our editors on any topic or issue covered in *The Connection*. Please include your full name and phone number or address. Send an email to dialogue@costco.com; or write to: Dialogue, *The Costco Connection*, P.O. Box 34088, Seattle, WA 98124-1088; or fax to (425) 313-6718. The editors reserve the right to edit letters for publication.

Bee health

So many people don't recognize how important bees truly are to our way of life ["Bees are in crisis," November 2013]. Hopefully more people will start to get involved and help to make a healthier environment for the bee population.

*Rachel Toboza
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

Brussels shouts

My husband and I were so excited to see the article "Sprout shout-out" in your October issue. You have inspired me to cook Brussels sprouts a whole new way. I have never roasted my Brussels sprouts. The recipes were so amazing. The flavor was just unbelievable. We used to not eat Brussels sprouts; now we can't get enough of them. I am never going back to plain old boring steaming.

*Joan Filippi
Woodbury, New York*

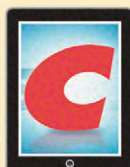
More on ferals

The October 2013 article "Don't fear the feral" and subsequent November Dialogue comments continue to elicit opinions from readers. Responses have come from both sides, with some in favor of trap-neuter-return and others dismayed at the loss of avian life due to ferals and domesticated outdoor cats.—Editor

MONTHLY READER SURVEY

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WHAT DO you think of this issue of *The Connection*? Tell us and you could be one of five winners of a \$50 Costco Cash card! Complete our anonymous reader feedback survey by going to Costco.com, scrolling to the bottom of the page and clicking on "Current Issue" of *The Connection*. Then click "Reader Survey" on the welcome page on the right. Upon completion of the survey, you will have the option to enter the drawing.



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The letters that followed your October article prompted me to add my personal experience.

Our two neutered feral cats coexist with our birds who use a raised bird feeder and bath. Although the cats have tried, they are no match for birds and squirrels in trees and thick bushes. Rats and moles have not done so well.

*Jo Merman
Amelia Island, Florida*

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Grab a bag and clean up this holiday.



Secret #5:

Clean tile and grout to scrub soap scum out.



Secret #21:

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Secret #46:

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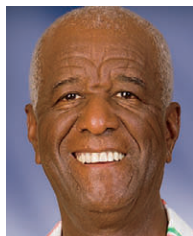
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Wally Amos is the founder of Wamoy Cookies. You can reach Wally at: www.thecookiemanagerhawaii.com.

Everything must change

I WAS DRIVING today and listening to one of my favorite CDs, by the late O.C. Smith, who had a hit record (remember records?) called "Little Green Apples." He began singing "Everything Must Change," written by Bernard Ighner. The song mentions many things that must change: "Winter turns to spring, a wounded heart will heal ... the young become the old ... nothin' and no one goes unchanged." I have heard the song numerous times. This time the thought that immediately came to mind was "I must change."

During the last three years, I have been having a deep spiritual awakening. For a very long time I have wanted others to change. Some time ago, during an impasse with my wife, when I was working on getting her to see things my way, I asked myself, "Why can't I change?" I had never asked that question before. Now I had broken the

barrier and made the leap to "I must change."

If everything must change, because nothing stays the same, then I am a part of that truth, because, truly, nothing stays the same. I am reminded of the old saying that you can never step into the same river twice. You cannot grow and stay young. Everything must change.

Another saying states, "When the student is ready, the teacher will appear." We often think of the teacher as being a person. In my case, O.C. Smith was the messenger. The teacher was the simple truth that everything must change. It was so clear and profound I could not escape it. In a heartbeat, I had a transformative, liberating experience.

There will be moments of forgetting. However, I have the truth—everything must change—to bring me back immediately.

What are you waiting on? What habit or habits are preventing you from moving forward? What behavior must you change? What value are you receiving from being stubborn and demanding to have your way? Commit to change some part of your behavior today. Fight no longer. Everything must change. Let go now and feel the chains fall to the ground.

Everything must change. Bring on change! ☞



More in archives
On Costco.com, enter
"Connection." At Online Edition,
search "Wally Amos."

Attack of the idea killers

BRAINSTORMING IS A collaborative idea-generation process that (theoretically) gets great results. Yet it takes only a couple of bad seeds to turn these sessions into unpleasant and unproductive nightmares. Mitchell Rigie and Costco member Keith Harmeyer, co-authors of *SmartStorming* (Dog Ear Publishing, 2013; not available at Costco), say every company has its share of underminers and identify the most common offenders. See how many of these troublesome types you recognize.

Attention vampires. They always want to stand out and be the center of attention. They can smother a brainstorming session by dominating the conversation, excessively pushing their ideas and ultimately sucking the life out of the whole group.

Dictators. They love every idea, as long as it's theirs. These totalitarians feel they are the only ones with good ideas, or good taste, for that matter. Many bosses unknowingly become dictators in meetings (not on purpose, but their role in the company makes it too easy).

Idea assassins. These seasoned killers love to shoot down ideas—anyone's and everyone's. Under the pretense of being constructive, they find flaws, poke holes and pick apart promising ideas until they bleed to death.

Obstructionists. To them, nothing is simple or



MEDIA BAKERY

easy. They overcomplicate conversations and procedures and bring up extraneous facts or considerations that derail the flow of the group. Obstructionists overthink, overspeak and single-handedly dead-end otherwise promising sessions.

Social loafers. These are the people who show up for a brainstorming session but rarely participate in the generation of new ideas in a meaningful way or contribute much of substance. They usually sit back, appearing bored or aloof, and let others do the heavy lifting.

Wet blankets. These are the pessimists who have the unique ability to instantly dampen the enthusiasm level of a session by being discouraging and depressing, and the majority of their comments don't hold water.

To find out more about these brainstorming killers, and how to deal with them, go to <http://smartstorming.com>. ☞



Best young companies

MANAGEMENT EXPERT, professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and Costco member Peter Cappelli recently teamed with Turnstone, an office furniture brand, to search for the "Best Young Companies to Work For." To be considered, nominated companies had to be no more than 10 years old and employ no more than 100 people. Companies were not eligible to nominate themselves.

Finalists were then selected by a panel of judges, based on four main criteria: business goals and impact; leadership; culture and space; and success potential.

Thirteen of the 15 companies chosen are Costco members. They range from an e-commerce office and school supply company that gives 5 percent of all sales directly back to teachers (Chalkfly), to one dedicated to building the social media influence of celebrities and brands (Fanology), to one that helps consumers find and pay for parking (Parking Panda).

Costco congratulates all on this achievement.

Member companies are:

- **Chalkfly** (Detroit)
- **Cloudability** (Portland, Oregon)
- **Fanology** (Los Angeles)
- **Greatest** (New York)
- **Hoopla.io** (Kansas City, Kansas)
- **Nexus IT** (Overland Park, Kansas)
- **Parking Panda** (Baltimore)
- **SocialRadar** (Washington, D.C.)
- **SpareFoot** (Austin, Texas)
- **Sparkhouse** (Costa Mesa, California)
- **Sprout Social** (Chicago)
- **Sputnik Creative** (Austin, Texas)
- **Thnx Media** (Glen Ellyn, Illinois)

For more information, go to <http://myturnstone.com/best-young-companies-to-work-for>.

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CLARE TUCKER: MARKETING BASICS



Clare Tucker is managing director of The Vocational Marketing Academy, www.the-vma.com, which specializes in teaching the basics of marketing through short online courses.

How to maintain a healthy pipeline

IF YOU SET YOURSELF only one marketing resolution this year, here's my recommendation: Introduce an effective pipeline management system.

A pipeline management system is a mechanism that enables you to record, monitor, follow up and measure all leads that are generated as a result of your marketing activity. It is one of the most important aspects of successful marketing, yet all too often it is overlooked.

Whether you are organizing an event, conducting telemarketing, driving traffic to your website or simply tweeting, all of these marketing activities are being conducted for one simple reason: to generate leads for your business. So

if you fail to capture, follow up and measure where those leads come from—and determine how credible they wound up being and ultimately how much revenue they generated—you have to ask: What was the point of carrying out the marketing activity in the first place?

Another mistake companies tend to make is failing to follow up possible future leads. For example, you might conduct 10 days of telemarketing that generates 10 business appointments for you. However, you might have also uncovered a further 20 possible future prospects, people who are interested in your offering but can't consider it until the start of their new financial year, or who need to wait until their current arrangement expires. These are valuable marketing assets. Therefore, you should start a process of nurturing them and set reminders to follow up according to the information you have obtained.

There are many tools to help you manage your pipeline effectively, from simple spreadsheets, reminders and diaries to sophisticated customer relationship management systems (I recommend Sage ACT for smaller businesses).

If you undertake only one marketing-related activity this month, plan to set up your company with a pipeline management system. It will form the basis of effective marketing for the rest of the year. ☐

Dream big



"I VERY RARELY will go into a business because I think I'm going to make money out of it," says Sir Richard Branson, founder and chairman of Virgin Group (www.virgin.com), in a recent Inc.com interview. "What I [usually] see is a situation where I think we can really make a difference to other people's lives."

Branson knows a thing or two about starting businesses. The Virgin Group includes more than 400 companies, and many of them, such as Virgin Megastores and Virgin Atlantic Airways, are very successful. And, while he says he doesn't always pursue ventures because he believes he'll make money from them, according to *Forbes*, he's the fourth-richest businessperson in the UK.

"I sometimes think in life you've got to dream big by setting yourself seemingly impossible challenges," Branson says. "You then have to catch up with them. You can make what people believe is impossible possible if you set a big enough target. If you don't dream, nothing happens. And we like to dream big."

If these brief quotes speak to the entrepreneur in you, you can watch the entire interview (about two and half minutes). Just visit www.inc.com and type "Richard Branson" in the search tool, then click "Richard Branson: Knight of Big Business Ideas" from the list.—Will Field

Do you have a MAP?

YOU'RE BUSY. VERY BUSY. There are always distractions that demand your attention, so it's easy to get diverted away from your goals. Costco member Andrew Lock, presenter of a weekly WebTV show—available at www.helpmybusiness.com—advises that you need a MAP. Not a road map, but a MAP.

MAP stands for "massive action plan," and it's one of the most important keys to business success.

"The process of running a business is a bit like running a marathon," says Lock. If you start out sprinting, you'll get so worn out that you won't finish. That's pointless. Similarly, in business it's much better to take action consistently, doing something every day to advance toward the finish line of your goals.

Without action, Lock advises, nothing will happen. You'll stay still, and after a while you may even go backward in your business.

Don't underestimate the value of action. It's

more important than skills, qualifications or any other factor in business. Action makes everything else happen. Without it, you don't even have a business.

"To create a good MAP, you may have to get tough with yourself," Lock says. Discipline yourself during working days to ensure that you get things done.

Schedule a start and end time for all appointments—otherwise, what's to stop them from running on far beyond what you'd intended?

If you frequently get irritated with how little you've accomplished during a

day, get an accountability partner to help you. Start each day with the predetermined action that will make the most difference in your business. Don't start with mundane, busy tasks such as checking email and so on; instead, begin by bringing in some money.

Decide today what your MAP will be for this week, for this month and in the new year. ☐



IMAGE ZOO



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Online private eyes

RESEARCHING A POTENTIAL business associate, roommate, tenant or romantic interest to find out if he or she is honest and safe is important. Regardless of how people present themselves to you, you never know what's lurking in their past—or present. Type the term “online background check” into a Web browser and you will see that there are many different companies offering background check services to the general public. Here are some issues you should consider before engaging an online service.

Web-based background check services offered to the general public can provide accurate as well as inaccurate information based on a subject's first and last name and city of residence. Many sites charge a fee for access to information. Some sites that claim to be free will refer you to an affiliated site that you have to pay for. There can be additional fees for more specific background details that are not presented upfront. Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, if you deny a person employment, an apartment or insurance based on information found on one of these sites, you could end up in trouble.

Costco member and former FBI agent Harold Copus, founder of Copus Security Consultants in Atlanta, believes that when you use these sites “you get roped in a little bit.” He says, “You have to know what you're looking for. If you think you can get information that's super secret for \$7.99, it's not going to happen. Buyer beware.”

Costco member Thomas Elfmont, founder and CEO of Thomas Dale and Associates, a global investigative and security firm based in Los Angeles, notes, “Unless you have investigative experience, you will waste your money. The reason is, the average person has no idea where the search engines obtain their information and they also have no experience in reading and analyzing the information. Private investigators utilize databases that are not available to the general public. Even the subscription databases we utilize are normally only



about 60 to 70 percent accurate without analyzing the data and following up.”

If you choose to investigate online rather than hire a professional, keep in mind that sites you pay for may simply be utilizing public records you can already access free. The following resources for information are among those available to the public at no cost:

- The National Sex Offender Public Website, www.nsopw.gov, is coordinated by the U.S. Department of Justice and enables every citizen to search information from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and numerous Indian tribes for the identity and location of known sex offenders.

- Most court information is public record. The National Center for State Courts, www.ncsc.org, provides judicial-branch links for each state. Make sure you search every state that a person has lived in. On the county and city level, you may want to check whether the subject has any convictions and civil judgments. The information contained in documents filed in bankruptcy cases, at county, state and federal levels, are a matter of public record unless a document has been sealed. For more information on federal court records, visit www.uscourts.gov/courtrecords.

- Social media sites provide insights into a person's lifestyle and choices. Copus likes checking LinkedIn because he can see where someone worked and who they're associated with from a business standpoint.

- A general browser search may return information. However, you likely won't see details about whether a person has been arrested or evicted. Copus warns that you have to take reputation-rating sites such as Ripoff Report with a grain of salt, because “if someone is upset, they may slam you for no reason.”

The more information you have about a person, the better your searches will be. Knowing a middle name, date of birth and Social Security number will make it easier to find accurate information. Of course, if you're not completely sure you've found information on the right person, don't act on it unless you verify it first. [E]

TIPS FROM Fight Back!

Check yourself out

WHEN WAS THE last time you did a background check on yourself? There could be information about you on the Web, in your credit report or on specialty reports that could affect your chances of getting a job or a loan.

Credit reports are only one category of consumer reports. Specialty reporting companies focus on certain industries. Their reports may include information that is provided to employers, insurance companies, banks and landlords. Fact Sheet 6b at www.privacyrights.org has helpful information on specialty consumer reports.

If you are concerned about your criminal history, you can request a criminal history summary from the FBI, www.fbi.gov, to review the information on file or to challenge it. You may also request proof that such a summary does not exist. [C]

Fight Back! gets social

WHAT DO YOU do to be a proactive consumer and effect positive change in the world? Send us your photos, videos and comments on Instagram and Twitter, marked #IFightBack Costco #Consumer #Connection, or reach out to us on Facebook, and we'll share them with the entire Costco community.

Please note we are not licensed professionals in any field. If you are seeking advice you should consult with your own licensed professional. We do not assume any liability or responsibility for the interpretation, application or accuracy of any information provided.



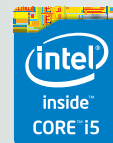
David Horowitz is a leading consumer advocate. David's daughter Amanda Horowitz is the CEO of Fight Back! and co-founder of FightBack.com. Email David and Amanda at info@fightback.com.

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Have a question for Fight Back?

Just log on to www.fightback.com or email info@fightback.com. Questions and answers of the greatest interest to Costco members will be used in this column (with the permission of the contributor) and will be posted on www.fightback.com.

More in archives
On Costco.com, enter “Connection”; at Online Edition, search “David Horowitz.”



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Also:

■ Fabulous phablets

Sound advice: Tricking out your TV

Q: I love my new HDTV, but now I'd like to improve the sound quality. What are my options?

A: With so much attention given to the television screen, it's easy to overlook the other important element of your home theater: sound.

Oh sure, your TV's stereo audio might be OK for watching the evening news or a rerun of an old sitcom, but you can do much, much better for the latest television programs, sports, video games, music videos and movies. As George Lucas once famously said, sound is half the movie experience.

You do have a few options to improve the audio quality of your big-screen entertainment. One is to buy an audio-video (AV) receiver, which is required to decode and distribute a surround-sound mix to speakers spread throughout the room. An AV receiver and six or more speakers—including a subwoofer for booming bass—can help replicate the multichannel movie-theater experience in your home.

Instead of buying everything separately, a "home theater in a box" is a convenient option that includes the AV receiver, speakers and, in some cases, a Blu-ray disc player.

But not everyone has the budget, room size or technical know-how to buy and install one of these solutions. A newer and increasingly popular alternative is to buy a sound bar, a horizontal speaker that sits just above or below the television screen. Sound bars house multiple speakers and can simulate surround sound for TV shows, movies, music and video games. They're generally less expensive than an AV receiver and separate speakers, and they're easy to set up. Plus, they take up little room, so they're ideal for small rooms, condos and apartments.

Along with support for multiple movie-audio formats such as Dolby Digital Pro Logic II and DTS Digital Surround, many sound bars ship with a wire-

less subwoofer (to place somewhere else in the room). Also, nearly all new models have integrated Bluetooth technology so you can stream music to the sound bar from your smartphone, tablet or computer.

Q: I've heard of a new device called a "phablet." Should I be interested?

A: As the name suggests, a phablet is somewhere between a phone and a tablet. These portable devices look like large phones—with touch screens measuring 5 to 6.9 inches diagonally—and are usually powered by the versatile Android platform.

A phablet borrows the best from the phone and tablet camps. On one hand, because they take a SIM card (and thus offer cellular connectivity), they are super-sized smartphones that can make calls and access online content—even when there isn't a Wi-Fi hot spot nearby.

And because they've got large screens, like a tablet, they're also ideal for watching video, playing games, reading e-books, looking at photos and browsing the Web.

Also, phablets work with virtually all of the downloadable apps available at the Google Play store. Unlike most tablets, which are typically 7 to 11 inches, a phablet can still fit in a pocket or clutch purse.

Typing and reading messages on a larger screen might be more comfortable than on a smaller phone. Some phablets, such as the Samsung Galaxy Note 3.0, ship with a high-tech stylus tucked into the back in case you'd like to use it instead of a finger.

Phablets are an ideal compromise for those who can't decide between a smartphone and a tablet, as well as a clever secondary device to tote around.

And expect to see them around for a while: More than 60 million phablets were expected to sell in 2013—up from 25 million in 2012—and sales are expected to top 146 million by 2016, says tech firm HIS. Market research firm IDC says phablets overtook shipments of both laptops and tablets in Asia during the fall of 2013. ☐

The Costco Connection

Costco carries a variety of sound bars and audio equipment in the warehouses and online at Costco.com. You can also find the latest phablets in the wireless kiosks in the warehouses and on Costco.com.

More in archives

On Costco.com, enter "Connection"; at *Online Edition*, search "Tech Connection."



Ask Marc Saltzman

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Questions about electronics or computers you purchased at Costco? Email them to: connection@costco.com.

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Please include "Marc Saltzman Q&A" in the subject line. Marc will answer selected questions in this column. We regret that unpublished questions cannot be answered individually.

Marc Saltzman, a leading high-tech reporter, contributes to more than three dozen prominent publications, appears on radio and TV, and is the author of 15 books. He's on Twitter at @marc_saltzman



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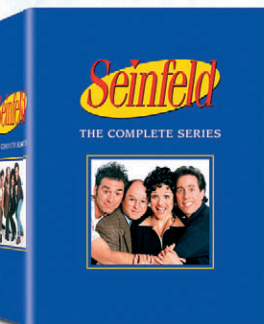
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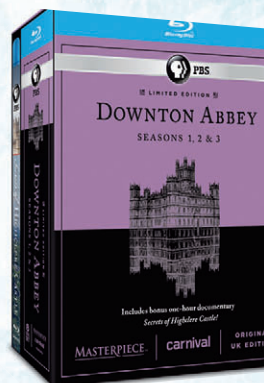
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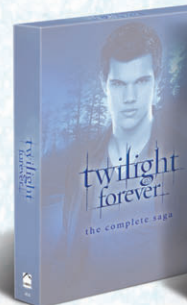


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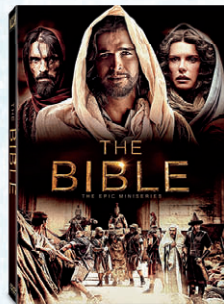
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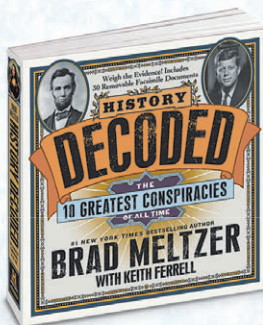
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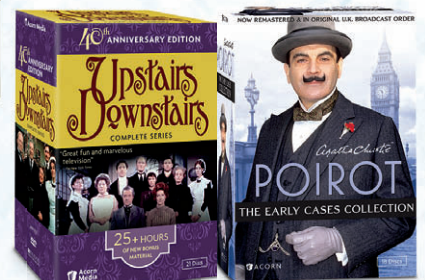
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Is regifting tacky?



'FESS UP: HAVE you ever rewrapped a gift you didn't like (or couldn't use) and given it to someone else? According to critics, the practice is socially unacceptable. Many people take great care in choosing gifts, and regifting amounts to rejecting the thoughtfulness of the giver, they insist. Proponents argue that regifting stretches one's gift-giving resources, helps the environment by recycling and is not as offensive to gift givers as previously thought. What do you think?



Find out more about this topic on the Web:

www.gsb.stanford.edu
(Search "The gifts we keep on giving")

www.huffingtonpost.com/money
(Search "regifting")

www.joyofmommajoyner.com
(Search "regifting")

www.jhunewsletter.com
(Search "The pros and cons of regifting presents")

YES

from members:

Sheliah Wright
North Las Vegas, NV



It wasn't given from the heart.

Kevin D. Flannery
Jefferson, GA



A gift given should be thought out. [It] should be bought with the individual in mind.

Jodi Torikawa
Kaneohe, HI



Someone put thought into getting you something and you're just giving it away? Return it.

NO

from members:

Lesly Senatus
Spring Valley, NY



Keeping a gift you don't want is wasteful. Someone else may appreciate [it].

Claudia Davila
Alamo, TX



As long as we remember who we got it from and don't regift it to them.

Sven Olsen
Escondido, CA



A gift is a gift. The fact that [it] was given by someone else makes no difference. It is the gift itself that is important.

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from an expert in the field:



Yvonne Durant (www.yvonneandyvettetiquette.com), is a writer who blogs about etiquette topics.

I DON'T LIKE regifting. Not only is it tacky, it can also be hurtful.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a gift as "something given to show friendship, affection, support, etc." It does not define

a gift as "stuff" to be casually rewrapped and given away. Yet that is how many people these days regard gifts.

Gifts have sentimental value. Take it from someone who happily agonizes over buying the ideal gifts for family and friends. It makes me feel so good that I'm going to make someone's eyes light up when he or she opens the gift box and there it is, just what that person wanted or needed, and the color is perfect, too!

Once I gave a friend a beautiful music box that played her favorite song. I was so happy when I found it and didn't care that it cost more than I had planned to spend. She later gave it to someone else and had no problem telling me afterward. It made me wonder whether we really know our friends. My twin sister, Yvette, has a similar story. She offered a small table as a gift to a friend who seemed happy to receive it. Soon after, the friend called Yvette and casually mentioned that she gave the table to her sister. Ouch!

Here's another true story. A group of friends chipped in for a present to celebrate a special birthday for their friend. They elected someone in the group to shop for the present; let's call her The Shopper. It was agreed that the money would be used to buy an expensive designer scarf.

When the birthday girl opened the box, one of the friends looked horrified. She recognized the scarf immediately because she had given the scarf to The Shopper as a gift! I never found out what happened to the money, but I know it took several years for that friendship to heal.

In the world of regifting, someone always knows someone who knows someone. And with social media, I can safely say that there are zero degrees of separation. That beautiful red cashmere sweater a friend gave to you that her cousin gave to her that you gushed about on the Internet and they both saw you wearing—in one fell swoop, you've unwittingly caused a family feud.

If someone gives you something you really don't want or need, ask if it's all right for you to return it. Or, if there's a gift receipt, return it to the store and get something else and let them know how thankful you were for the gift and that you were able to get something just as special.

I consider every present that I have given or received a gift of love. It's something to hold dear. You would never regift love, would you?

from an expert in the field:



Jodi R. Smith is president of Mannersmith Etiquette Consulting (www.mannersmith.com) and author of *The Etiquette Book: A Complete Guide to Modern Manners* (Sterling, 2001; not available at Costco).

ONE OF MY favorite gifts is my desktop business card holder, an elegant fork that has been remodeled to hold business cards. Knowing that "Gracious Dining" is

one of my most requested programs, my mentor gave this business card holder to me as a meaningful and thoughtful gift. And actually, I happen to know it is a regifted gift. Did you gasp? Yes, it is perfectly acceptable to regift. But, as with all the other areas of etiquette, guidelines must be followed to properly regift.

Brand-new and never used. The item you are giving should be brand-new and never used—never worn, never washed, never played with, even for five minutes. It should be contained in the original packaging. It should be a recent acquisition so that, should the recipient return it to the store, it would be on the shelves.

Perfect presentation. Just as a gourmet meal would lose its appeal served in a Styrofoam box, care and consideration should be given to the wrapping, ribbon and bows on the regifted item. Also, take the time to be sure any original cards have been removed.

Separate circles. As you are making your gift lists, be sure to check them twice. When regifting,

you want to ensure that the person who gave you the gift does not know and/or interact with the person to whom you are giving it. The more unusual the item, the more the distance should be between the giver and the regifted.

Really, truly. Regifting is not to rid yourself of some ill-gotten gift. When regifting an item, it must be something that you would have purchased for the individual had you gone to the store. To merely pass along an item you cannot stand is inappropriate. Save it for a yard sale. However, if you are allergic to perfume, but know your neighbor loves this fragrance, or if you are on a diet, but your co-worker adores gourmet chocolate, then these types of regifting are perfectly acceptable.

Honesty policy. For certain items, it is proper to announce the gift is a regift. His grandmother's diamond in your engagement ring adds meaning. Or, as was the case with my mentor, she put the fork in a box and wrapped it in beautiful paper. In the card, she wrote about our friendship and said she knew I adored the fork and it would mean so much to her to know it had found a happy home in my office.

As you and your wallet brace for this year's gift-giving season, it is my hope that illuminating this area of etiquette will help ease your budget and expand your options.

NOVEMBER DEBATE RESULTS:

Should the DUI limit be lowered?

28% YES
72% NO

Percentage reflects votes received by November 14, 2013. Results may reflect Debate being picked up by blogs.

• • • • •

OCTOBER DEBATE RESULTS:

Should we separate commercial banks from investment banks?

YES: 90% NO: 10%

Percentage reflects votes received by October 31, 2013.



See Dialogue pages for more debate responses

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By Don Sadler

OF ALL THE financial tasks performed by small businesses, preparing accurate financial forecasts may be the most important. All major business decisions flow from these forecasts: decisions about hiring, borrowing, spending and investing in new equipment, facilities and product lines, for example.

"Time spent forecasting is time well spent," says Gene Siciliano, a Costco member and the president of Western Management Associates (www.cfoforrent.com) in Los Angeles. "Forecasting helps you determine ahead of time whether you'll be able to take advantage of potential opportunities or need to take steps to mitigate potential problems. It gives you more time to think through how you'll react to certain financial situations."

Art or science?

Creating financial forecasts is both an art and a science: art in the sense that it involves some creativity in making future assumptions, and science in the sense that the exercise is based in part on historical data. "The science comes from recognizing that the future is uncertain, and then measuring and handling these uncertainties in a quantitative manner," says Gerald A. Bush, a Costco member and the chairman of Decision Strategies (www.decisionstrategies.com) in Atlanta.

Time to plan

The art and science of financial forecasts

Due to its inherent uncertainty, financial forecasting is less about coming up with exact figures and more about projecting a realistic range of possible numbers. "Good forecasting creates bookends around a reasonable range of possible outcomes," says Bush. "It uses the knowledge of subject-matter experts to talk through what factors could create upside or downside results."

Siciliano points to several potential benefits of forecasting, including more accurate and consistent pricing, higher profitability (even during sales slowdowns) and the ability to avoid cash-flow crunches. A financial forecast is also usually required in order to obtain bank financing, he notes.

"Banks want to lend to businesses that can demonstrate the ability to generate enough revenue to pay expenses, earn a profit and repay the loan," he says. "Therefore, they generally want to see financial forecasts for the next two to three years, including a sales forecast, anticipated cash inflows and outflows, and a realistic cash-flow budget."

Start by looking back

The best way to start the financial forecasting process is by looking backward at your company's recent financial history—specifically, the past six to 12 months. Then make pro forma revenue and expense projections on your financial statements.

"In projecting revenue, start with your sales from the prior year and adjust these up or down," says Howard Goldman, a Costco member and partner with CFO Edge (www.cfoedge.com) in Los Angeles, a provider of outsourced chief financial officer (CFO) services. "Based on economic and market conditions and your planned sales and marketing efforts, do you expect sales to be higher or lower, and by what percentage, in the coming year?"

The next step is to project your company's income (or cash flow) for each month of the upcoming year. "This is critical," says Goldman, "because sales and income are two different things. If your company offers 30-day vendor terms, for example, sales made in March should become cash receipts in April."


On the other side of the ledger are your business expenses, which Goldman says fall into three broad categories. Fixed expenses, aka overhead, stay fairly consistent from month to month, and include things such as

rent or mortgage, utilities, payroll and other selling, general and administrative expenses. Variable expenses, meanwhile, fluctuate based on sales volume and marketing efforts. These include commissions, advertising and marketing, and travel and entertainment.

Finally, there are the direct costs incurred in the manufacture and/or delivery of products or services; these are referred to as "cost of goods sold," or CGS. "For example, inventory and raw materials would be considered CGS for a typical manufacturing company," says Goldman.

Pulling everything together

With these pro formas in hand, you can now make profitability projections. Subtracting CGS from total sales will yield projected gross profit, while subtracting fixed and variable expenses and taxes from gross profit will yield net profit, or your projected bottom line.

"The most useful aspect of financial forecasting is the ability to make better business decisions," says Bush. "A forecast doesn't need to 'boil the ocean' by being overly detailed. It only needs to provide sufficient information to help business owners confidently select between viable alternatives." 

Don Sadler, don@don-sadlerwriter.com, is a freelance writer based in Atlanta who specializes in topics related to small business and finance.

Resources

FOR HELP IN preparing financial forecasts, talk to your banker, accountant or an outsourced CFO services provider. Other sources of assistance include Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) and the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE); go to www.sba.gov and click on the "Find Resources" box to locate an SBDC office or SCORE executive near you.



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Home Office Deductions

Advertising
Office square footage
Supplies
Wages

The IRS introduces a new method for at-home business deductions

Deduction induction

IMAGE SOURCE/CHRIS A RUSNAK

By Steve Hoffman

DO YOU HAVE a home office? You might have heard something about the home office deduction in the past.

In the past, this deduction was questioned a lot by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), but we have Dr. Nader E. Soliman to thank for a change in heart by the IRS—that and the fact that the Supreme Court rejected the tax agency's case.

Soliman was an anesthesiologist who spent most of his workweek with patients at three different hospitals, but none of the hospitals provided him with an office. He used a spare bedroom in his house for contacting patients and surgeons, maintaining billing records, preparing for treatments and reading medical journals.

His home office deduction was denied by the IRS. But he contested the decision, and in 1993 the case was decided by the Supreme Court. The Court denied Soliman's appeal but issued a two-pronged test to determine if a home workplace was eligible for a tax deduction: the relative importance of the activities performed, and time spent at each place. Congress consequently amended the law so that a home office could meet the "principal place of business" test if it is the only fixed location where administrative or management activities are performed.

Now, the IRS has gone a step further and announced a simpler option to figure the business use of your home, beginning this year. As before, you must show that you use your house for business. Then, if you indeed do qualify, you have two options for calculating the deduction.

Principal place of business. You must

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

At-home business deductions at a glance

Regular method	Simplified method
Deduction for home office use of a portion of a residence allowed only if that portion is exclusively used on a regular basis for business purposes	Same
Percentage of home used for business	Allowable square footage of home used for business (not to exceed 300 square feet)
Actual expenses determined and records maintained	Standard \$5 per square foot used to determine home business deduction
Home-related itemized deductions apportioned between Schedule A and business schedule (Schedule C or F)	Home-related itemized deductions claimed in full on Schedule A
Depreciation deduction for portion of home used for business	No depreciation deduction
Recapture of depreciation on gain upon sale of home	No recapture of depreciation upon sale of home
Deduction cannot exceed gross income from business use of home less business expenses	Same
Amount in excess of gross income limitation may be carried over	Amount in excess of gross income limitation may <i>not</i> be carried over
Loss carryover from use of regular method in prior year may be claimed if gross income test is met in the current year	Loss carryover from use of regular method in prior year may <i>not</i> be claimed

DEDUCTION INDUCTION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

show that you use your home as your principal place of business. If you conduct business at a location outside your home, but also use your home substantially and regularly to conduct business, you may qualify for a deduction.

For example, if you have in-person meetings with patients, clients or customers in your home in the normal course of your business, even though you also carry on business at another location, you can deduct your expenses for the part of your home used exclusively and regularly for business.

You can deduct expenses for a separate free-standing structure, such as a studio, garage or barn, if you use it exclusively and regularly for your business. It does not have to be your principal place of business or the only place where you meet patients, clients or customers.

Additional tests for employee use. If you are an employee and you use a part of your home for business, you may qualify for a deduction for its business use. You must meet the tests discussed above, plus:

- Your business use must be for the convenience of your employer.
- If the use of the home office is merely “appropriate and helpful,” you cannot deduct expenses for the business use of your home.

The simplified method. If you qualify

for a deduction, a new option for calculating the amount on your tax return is the “simplified method.” This option does not change the rules for who may claim a home office deduction. It merely simplifies the calculation and record-keeping requirements. It can save you a lot of time and will require less paperwork and record keeping.

You can use the simplified method when you file your 2013 tax return next year. Unlike the regular method, you won’t need to calculate your deduction based on actual

expenses; just multiply the square footage of your home office by the rate, up to the maximum allowed, and take your deduction (see chart on previous page).

The rate is \$5 per square foot of the part of your home used for business. The maximum footage allowed is 300 square feet. That means the most you can deduct is \$1,500 per year. Not bad, and so simple. You might not even need a calculator to figure this out.

You can choose either this simplified method or the old-fashioned actual expense method for any tax year. This means you can choose each year which method to use on your tax return. You cannot change methods in the same year, though.

Other considerations. If you use the simplified method and you own your own home, you cannot depreciate your home office, but you can still deduct other qualified home expenses, such as mortgage interest and real estate taxes, without allocating these expenses between personal and business use. (If you use the actual expense method, you’ll need to allocate these expenses.)

You can still fully deduct business expenses that are not related to your home if you use the simplified method. These may include costs such as advertising, supplies and wages paid to your employees.

By the way, if you store materials or products in your garage, that qualifies for the home office deduction.

Talk with your accountant to see if you qualify and if the new simplified method for deducting a home office is right for you. Or, check it out yourself by going to www.irs.gov and getting Publication 587, *Business Use of Your Home*.

The IRS is also on YouTube now; check out its video on the simplified home office deduction at www.youtube.com (search “Simplified Home Office Deduction”).



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Author, speaker and certified financial planner Steve Hoffman is a tax professional who spent 15 years at the IRS.

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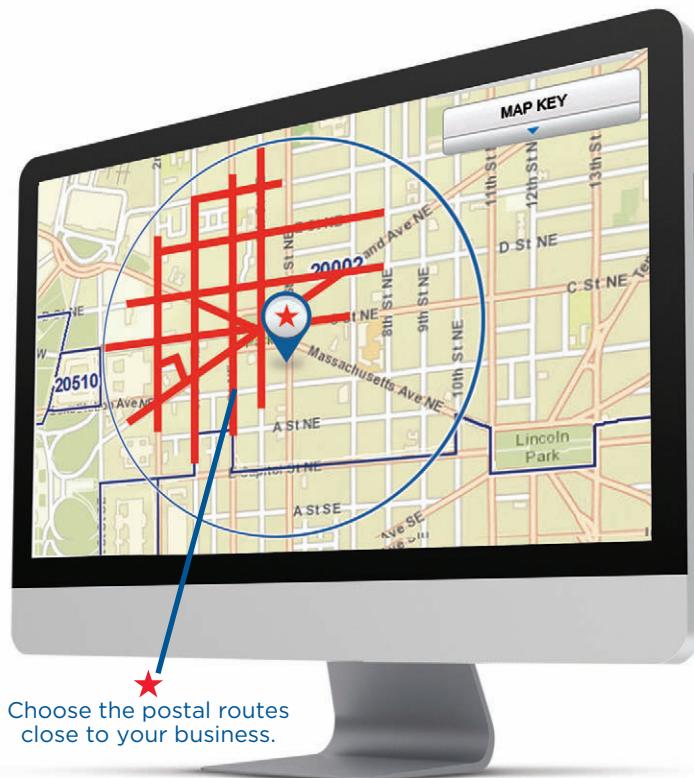
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The business of helping the world

Social responsibility as a core business strategy

By Steven Van Yoder

GILDEN TREE PRODUCES a line of spa products that are carried by upscale retailers and salons. Though headquartered in the American heartland of Omaha, Nebraska, the company has brought big changes to a small village in rural Pakistan and offers hope to local women mired in poverty.

Gilden Tree (<http://gildentree.com>) employed a group of traditionally marginalized village women who hand-produce the products. "The impact on the women's lives has been dramatic. Our business gave them disposable income for the first time," says Costco member Ann Thariani, who co-founded Gilden Tree with her husband, Kumy.

Wanting to give something back, the company began paying for the education of their employees' children, and later for the education of the women themselves. Gilden Tree's ongoing effort not only performs a social good, it earns dividends for the company. "We cultivate a happy workforce, and have virtually eliminated quality-control problems because we have such loyal employees," says Thariani.

During a subsequent visit of the Tharianis to Pakistan, a worker commented with a smile, "Oh, that daughter of mine—she's always got her nose in a book!" It was a defining moment, one of which the Tharianis are very proud. The seemingly impossible had become possible.

"Being socially responsible can create invaluable opportunities and connect with your market on a much deeper level," says Thariani. "We started educating kids in Pakistan because it was the right thing to do, but once we let people know, it led to numerous media appearances that boosted sales well over 25 percent. That kind of exposure is invaluable for any company—but for a small business, it's practically a miracle."



Strategic social responsibility

A company's proven commitment to a worthy cause is a strong way to build brand loyalty. Strategic social responsibility goes further than traditional charity by blending enlightened self-interest with addressing some of the world's most pressing challenges.

Recent studies show that consumers look for companies that support social and environmental change. The 2011 *Cone/Echo Global CR Opportunity Study*, a 10-country survey, found that 94 percent of consumers were likely to switch brands to one that supports a cause if both brands are similar in price and quality, and 65 percent had already purchased a cause-related product in the past 12 months.

"Social responsibility has finally entered the mainstream," says Costco member Kellie McElhaney, author of *Just Good Business: The Strategic Guide to Aligning Corporate Responsibility and Brand* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008; not available at Costco). "Social responsibility helps businesses stand out in a noisy marketplace and attract consumers who are willing to spend more, remain loyal and prefer brands that support a cause or an issue about which they care deeply."

Strategic social responsibility integrates core business objectives and competencies around a cause. By embedding support for social causes into day-to-day business culture

and operations, companies boost employee recruitment, morale and retention, and strengthen relationships with customers, clients, prospects and vendors.

Creating and fulfilling a social responsibility strategy

According to experts, your business goals should guide your social responsibility efforts while intersecting with the values of your clients, customers and employees. This ensures you make a real contribution to both the cause and your business.

Examples of how to accomplish this might be a business that serves young parents and also supports a local school, or a publishing company that raises funds for a public library.

Costco member Craig Wolfe, founder of CelebriDucks (<http://celebriducks.com>), made his cause reviving American manufacturing. "The rubber duck was invented in the USA, but now every rubber duck is made overseas," says Wolfe, who designs celebrity rubber ducks for the National Basketball Association, the National Hockey League and NASCAR. "Today, we're the only company making rubber ducks in America, which helps generate orders from Harley-Davidson and the Future Farmers of America and attracted national major media coverage."

Other methods of fulfilling a social strategy might involve partnering with a nonprofit or donating time and resources.

Nonprofit partnerships. Cause partnerships can involve joint fundraising events or longer, more complex arrangements where both partners benefit. The nonprofit or the cause acquires resources such as donations, volunteers and heightened visibility; the business partner achieves strategic marketing objectives, such as increased sales and goodwill.

Illegal Pete's (www.illegalpetes.com), a Colorado chain of Mexican restaurants, earns tremendous local goodwill and customer loyalty by supporting community causes. Its Starving Artist program feeds touring musicians free when they come through Colorado. And its recent Smother Autism campaign donated \$1 for every "smothered" burrito sold, raising 7.5 percent of the funds needed to open a school for autistic children while boosting company revenues throughout the promotion by 15 percent.

Costco member Kathleen Holland (<http://kmhassociates.ca>), who is based in Toronto, connected her corporate marketing expertise to international development, launching a consultancy that helps African entrepreneurs expand their export businesses. "After participating in an Canadian trade mission to Africa, I made development a primary

focus," says Holland. "Word of mouth positioned me as an expert in African export development, and I now have international NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] as clients" of our consulting services.

Donating time and resources. When Eunice Azzani, an executive recruiter, volunteered to serve on the board of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, she didn't anticipate that it would connect her with executives from Mervyn's, Bank of America and Wells Fargo Bank, all of whom eventually hired her to work for them.

"People don't hire a piece of paper or a process. They hire people they trust," Azzani says. "Volunteering for a position at a local organization makes you very trustworthy." She advises business owners to target causes they believe in: "If you're helping with a cause you believe in, people will see that you care. And they'll realize you will probably care as much about your work."

Social responsibility is most effective when woven into a company's culture. HMC Architects (<http://hmcarchitects.com>), a 360-person architecture firm with offices in California, Arizona and Nevada, leverages its knowledge to advance environmental causes and boost its brand in key markets, including, schools, hospitals and municipal buildings.

In one program, HMC teamed with an elementary school to deliver student workshops in water conservation, renewable energy and reducing waste in landfills. The firm designed grade-specific interactive videos and hands-on group activities to reinforce concepts. HMC hopes to publish a teacher's handbook so that teachers in schools throughout the United States can use the program, tools and materials. The firm has received considerable recognition for its efforts, including honors by the U.S. Green Building Council Volunteer IMPACT! Award.

Telling your story

Communicate your social responsibility efforts within your marketplace. Your cause should generate interest in your business and motivate people to buy from you. Tremendous goodwill can be generated, and media attention can be a side benefit.

The 2011 *Cone/Echo Global CR Opportunity Study* shows that consumers want companies to share the details (and results) of their social responsibility programs, with 82 percent more likely to purchase a product that clearly demonstrates the results of the company's initiatives than one that does not.

Although Gilden Tree initially kept a low profile about its efforts in Pakistan, in 2003, with the encouragement of friends, the Tharianis began to talk about their efforts,



B Corporations walk the talk

UNTIL RECENTLY, consumers lacked a way to evaluate a company's social responsibility track record. B Lab (www.bcorporation.net) is changing that. The nonprofit organization, dedicated to using the power of business to solve social and environmental problems, has grown into a community of more than 870 certified "B Corporations," aka B Corps, from 29 countries and 60 industries, working together toward one unifying goal: to redefine success in business.

B Corps undergo a stringent assessment measuring impacts on their workforce, suppliers, consumers, community and the environment. "B Corp certification offers consumers a reliable means to evaluate and reward socially responsible companies that meet comprehensive and transparent social and environmental performance standards," says B Lab co-founder Jay Coen Gilbert.

Notable B Corps include Cabot Creamery, Ben & Jerry's, Numi Tea, New Belgium Brewery and Method Home (all make products sold by Costco). B Lab is actively promoting legislation (passed in 20 states, with legislation pending in 16 more) creating a new corporate form that meets higher standards of purpose, accountability and transparency to put people and planet on an equal footing with profit.—SVY

and incorporated their social mission into their marketing. "The response has been pretty extraordinary," says Ann Thariani. "We were featured in *Time* magazine as well as other national publications because of our focus on giving something back." ■

Steven Van Yoder (www.getslightlyfamous.com) is a brand strategist and author.



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Season for giving

Nine tips for effective philanthropy

By Bruce DeBoskey

OVER THE WINTER holidays, people are in a giving mood. We give to family. We give to friends. And many of us choose this generous time of year to give to charity.

Most of the nation's 1.6 million nonprofit organizations ramp up their efforts to attract donors over the holiday season. No matter where you go, it seems as if someone doing important work somewhere is asking for a contribution of your time, talent or treasure.

No person or business can give to everyone who asks. You want your donations to make a difference. How do you make the right, most impactful decisions—not only during the traditional giving season, but also throughout the entire year?

1. Examine your reasons for giving.

Understand your own values and what you want to accomplish for yourself, your family and/or your business. Reasons for donating can vary widely.

Individuals can be motivated by compassion, gratitude, tradition, religion, status, peer pressure, taxes, moral duty, setting an example, creating a legacy—even guilt.

2. Determine what impact you'd like to have. Donors usually seek to help others in need, find a solution to a problem, advance a cause or preserve something of value. It is better to have a tangible impact on a smaller number of nonprofits than to spread yourself too thin. In other words, go deep, not wide, in your giving.

3. Involve your family and colleagues. In a family setting, involve your children, grandchildren, parents and grandparents in developing your approach to philanthropy. Each generation has much to teach and much to learn from the next. In a business, working with employees, customers, suppliers and others can enhance the impact of your philanthropic endeavors.

4. Develop a strategy. Knowing why you're giving and what outcomes you want to achieve are the first two building blocks of a philanthropic strategy.

You may also wish to seek input from the four legs of the philanthropic planning table: your tax, legal, financial and philanthropic advisers. Each of those experts can play an important role in bringing their expertise to help you develop a strategy that achieves your philanthropic goals consistent with other important legal, tax and financial objectives.

5. Do some research. Make sure that nonprofits that align with your values and goals are financially sound. A nonprofit should have 501(c)(3) status that is approved and current. To uncover accurate reporting on how funds are spent, review annual reports, audited financials and IRS Form 990 filings.


Accept that a reasonable percentage of your donation will be used for the salaries, technology and overhead needed to run the nonprofit's programs. There is no automatic

one-size-fits-all formula. Rather, each organization's expenses must be assessed relative to its size, programs, budget, etc.

6. Ask "So what?" Make sure that the work of the nonprofit is making a real difference. A well-run nonprofit will accurately measure and honestly describe its mission-related impact as well as areas where it hasn't yet met its goals. Ask "So what?" of nonprofits that report only on activities, rather than on the outcomes they achieved or the difference they made. Look for evidence of long-term, systemic changes.

7. Volunteer your time. Cash is not the only way to contribute to the community. Everyone can help in some way, regardless of assets. Volunteer activities are a great way for families or co-workers to spend time together, share values, learn about the work of nonprofits and make a difference.

8. Give boldly. People rarely donate so much money or time to charities that they can no longer take care of themselves or their family. Many of us can give far more than we currently do without sacrificing our quality of life or that of our loved ones. Responding to matching gift challenges can help your bold gift achieve even greater reach and impact.

9. Start today. Your community, country and world need your help right now. The sooner you begin to give more boldly and purposefully, the sooner you will see positive results in your life, your business and the lives of others. Be thoughtful, strategic and effective with your giving—now and all year. Everyone will reap the benefits. 

Bruce DeBoskey (www.deboskeygroup.com) is a Costco member and a Colorado-based philanthropic strategist. He writes a column, "On Philanthropy," for The Denver Post.



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Fine families, fine wines

Their hands in the soil,
their names on the label

By Annette Alvarez-Peters



ROBIN FIELD

WINEMAKING IS ONE of the world's oldest and largest businesses, reaching back to mankind's earliest agricultural pursuits and today practiced in more than 50 countries around the globe. In North America alone, there are more than 8,000 wineries, with wine produced in all 50 states. And the industry keeps growing to meet global demand.

Yet, despite its massive size, the industry is intensely personal. Winemaking requires an intimate relationship between the winemaker and the land, the grapes and the production process. Perhaps nowhere is this closeness more evident than in family-owned wineries.

With their bottles bearing their names in many cases, these families pour their hearts and souls into making the best wine possible. Whether it's in their genes or a passion discovered later in life, they have embraced the wine world and what Mother Nature provides every year.

In this issue, I'd like to introduce you to five family-owned wineries. These outstanding families are all key players in their respective regions. Generation after generation, they are focused on the quality of their vineyards and vinification techniques. They all produce a plethora of wines in a variety of styles to fit any holiday budget.

Bring a little festive cheer to your home by uncorking a few bottles from these wonderful families. A toast to you and yours. *Santé! Salute! Salud! Cheers!*

Montes Colchagua Valley, Chile

FEW VIEWS ANYWHERE in the world are as spectacular as the vista that opens up before visitors at the Montes cellars in Colchagua Valley, Chile.

Miles of grapevines in tidy rows stretch out over the Colchagua Valley, creeping up the surrounding hills until the steepness turns them back. This is where Aurelio Montes pioneered hillside plantings in Chile—and, in relentlessly pursuing such innovations, helped put his South American homeland on the map among the world's finest wine producers.

In 1988, Montes and three partners founded the winery with a single vision: to show the world that truly world-class wines could

come from the unique soils and conditions of Chile. As they celebrate their 25th anniversary, they've clearly accomplished that goal, with international recognition over the years for such premium successes as the Bordeaux-style Montes Alpha M. Today the winery's portfolio offers a wide range of price points, and its wines are exported to more than 110 countries.

Everything about their operation is focused on perfection. For example, during my visit to Montes one of the most interesting people I met was the expert soil analyst the company uses to find the best matches of vine and earth.

Aurelio Montes is recognized for his insistence on focusing on



The Murray and Montes families were among the four partners who founded the Montes winery.

wine quality in Chile instead of quantity. Success has followed: When he started in business there were only 14 exporting wineries in Chile; now there are more than 200. Aurelio's son, Aurelio Jr., oversees vineyards in the premier winegrowing region of Mendoza, Argentina, under

the Kaiken brand.

This is how Aurelio describes his family's approach to managing the vineyards: "I play the music and let the vines dance!" 🎵



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MONTES

Taittinger Champagne, France

THE TAITTINGER STORY, it could be said, begins in 1240. According to a local legend, that year Thibaud IV, the Count of Champagne, returned from Cyprus with two treasures: a most elegant rose, the damask, and a vine that was the ancestor of the Chardonnay variety.

Chardonnay would become an essential grape in the making of

one of the world's most celebrated and special wines: Champagne. Taittinger's real story begins in 1932, when an aspiring businessman named Pierre Taittinger bought Château de la Marquetterie, a winery founded in 1734 whose vines had been planted by Benedictine monks, and started building a business that today is associated with the best of the Champagnes.

The winery is now operated by Pierre-Emmanuel Taittinger (Pierre's grandson) and his children, Clovis and Vitalie. Its *tête de cuvée* is the Comtes de Champagne, made up of 100 percent Chardonnay. The fami-



Today's Taittingers: Clovis, left, Vitalie and their father, Pierre-Emmanuel.



ly's signature is their devotion to Chardonnay and their patience in aging their wines, typically exceeding minimum requirements.

I have often heard Taittinger Champagnes described as feminine, and I agree. Chardonnay

imparts elegance, finesse and a special fruitiness to these wonderful wines, and the perfectly persistent, tiny bubbles signify an excellent Champagne. As Clovis explains, "We believe that there is great magic in our tiny bubbles." 🍾

CONTINUED ON PAGE 40



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TAITTINGER



Featured at Costco

You'll find these fine wines at select Costco locations:

Bodegas Muga Red Reserva,
Rioja, Spain
Item #813335

Taittinger Brut Reserve,
Champagne, France
Item #800711

Villa Antinori Toscana,
Tuscany, Italy
Item #799299

Perrin & Fils Vinsobres les Cornuds,
Rhône, France
Item #934788

Montes Alpha Cabernet Sauvignon,
Colchagua Valley, Chile
Item #895542

Antinori - Tuscany, Italy

THE NAME ANTINORI has been part of Italy's rich winemaking heritage since the 1300s, with the family historically influential not only in the country's winemaking regions but also in its artistic center, Florence.

Today the massive company is run by Marchesi Piero Antinori with the help of his three daughters, Albiera, Allegra and Alessia. While you might expect such an ancient company to be rooted in traditional vinification techniques, in truth it has more often been defined by its experimentation, both in the vineyards and in the cellars, and by inno-

ventions in the process of making wine. And while Antinori remains devoted to its famous estates in Tuscany and Umbria, it has exported its expertise overseas to ventures in Napa Valley and Washington state.

The company's flagship wine is Tignanello; it was called "treasonous" when it was introduced in 1971 for its use of Cabernet Sauvignon in a Sangiovese blend—against regulations at the time—and aging in small French *barriques*. But soon the practice spread across Tuscany, launching the "Super Tuscan" revolution and bringing new life to the region.



"We are very proud of our 26-generation tradition," says Piero. "However, this does not prevent us from constantly trying new ways to improve our wines and innovate."

I personally love these wines, which are known for their elegance, finesse and beautiful structure. Sangiovese to me says Italy, and the Antinoris have done so much with this variety of grape. The family's motto sums it up best: *Te duce proficio*, which means "the pursuit of excellence." 🍷



Marchesi Piero Antinori carries on centuries of tradition today with his daughters: Albiera, left, Allegra and Alessia.

Famille Perrin - Rhône Valley, France

IN THE WORLD of family-owned wineries, one company that truly defines the category is the Famille Perrin winery in France's southern Rhône Valley.

The family purchased their first property in the region in 1909 with the acquisition of Château de Beaucastel. Since then, the Perrins have purchased or leased lands that have become the famous appellations of the southern Rhône: Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Gigondas, Vinsobres and more. Today, fourth and fifth generations run the business.

The Perrin family established a reputation for expertise in the various lands of the Rhône Valley. Today, they are fully committed to organic growing prac-

tices, with the simple belief that, to produce the best wine, the vines must grow as naturally as possible. At their landmark Beaucastel property, chemical fertilizers, pesticides and insecticides have not been used since 1964. They have converted other vineyards to organic practices.

The family follows two traditional winemaking principles dictated by the southern Rhône climate and soil. First, blends work best here—and they have a lot to work with, since the region has 13 historical wine varieties. And second, maturing is key to bringing out the best in the grapes. The nuances of the right blends and maturity have been passed down from generation to



Fourth and fifth generations of the family (below) run the Famille Perrin winery in France.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF FAMILLE PERRIN

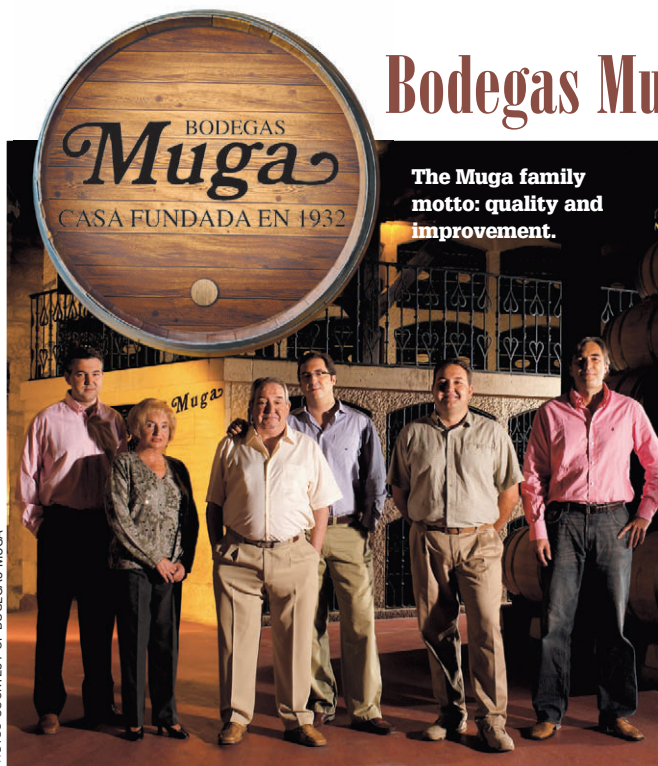


generation to generation.

"We are nine family members working together," Marc Perrin

says. "Every key decision on our wines or our vineyards is made by a family member to guarantee the Perrin style and quality."

On a recent visit to this family winery, I noticed a row of bicycles in front of the building. Asking about them, I was told that the Perrins love to ride in the area to check on existing vineyards and explore future locations. This family's commitment to quality can be tasted in every bottle that bears its name. 🇫🇷



The Muga family motto: quality and improvement.

Bodegas Muga - Rioja Alta, Spain

THE MUGA GROUNDS in Spain's famous Rioja Alta region, at the foot of the Montes Obarenes, are rich in history and tradition.

The winery is now run by a third generation of the Muga family and operates in a stunning 200-year-old building built of stone and oak. Here, they are very traditional in winemaking ways. For example, Bodegas Muga is one of the few Spanish wine cellars with on-site coopers and vat makers to make the barrels.

"We are obsessed with quality," says Juan Muga. "Everything we do is about continuously improving our vineyards, our winemaking and our people."

The winery was founded in 1932 by husband and wife Isaac Muga and Aurora Caño, who made their first wines in an underground cellar. Today,

Bodegas Muga covers 620 acres of vineyards and has control over an additional 370 acres owned by local vine growers. It's the right size to explore the nuances of the particular *terroirs* on the property, while staying true to tradition.

These lands are famous for a variety of grapes: Tempranillo (the essence of Spain), Garnacha (Grenache), Mazuelo (Carignan) and Graciano for the red wines; and Viura and Malvasia for the whites. Everything here breathes a sense of the Old World: wines with that distinct minerality and earthiness that represent the best of Spain.

A little slice of heaven for me is a plate of Spanish specialties—*jamon ibérico*, Manchego cheese and Marcona almonds—with a glass of Muga Rioja. 🇪🇸

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BODEGAS MUGA

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The taste of time

BORDERED BY A narrow inlet of the North Sea called the Moray Firth to the north and by the Cairngorm Mountains to the south, the Speyside region is home to half of Scotland's single malt Scotch whisky distilleries and is the true heart of Scotch whisky production. Here, two essential elements for making fine Scotch are abundant: pure, clean spring water, provided by the River Spey, and high-quality barley, which grows abundantly in the region's temperate climate.

Kirkland Signature™ 40-Year-Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky from The Glenlivet distillery is a distinguished representative of the top-quality Scotch whiskies produced in this famous region. This single malt was distilled in 1972 and matured in ex-bourbon casks, helping to create a pleasingly smooth Scotch with a deep golden color and aromas of vanilla, sweet smoked oak, rich fruits and grass. On the palate it has a sharp hint of spiced fruit and cream, accompanied by a



slight touch of refreshing green apple, giving way to a refreshingly long, warm, dry finish.

Whisky has been made in the Speyside region for some two centuries. Early farmers found its mild climate and long hours of summer sunshine perfect for growing excellent barley. Costco buyers were fortunate to purchase a limited quantity of fine 40-year-old Scotch from the region, and it is being offered



in select warehouses while supplies last (to find out where this special Scotch is available, go to Costco.com and search "Kirkland Signature Scotch").

"Such a 40-year-old Scotch is extremely rare and is a collector's item," says Annette Alvarez-Peters, who oversees Costco's wine, beer and spirits program. "It is a true treasure-hunt item for our members."—*Tim Talevich*

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Recipes from a few of your favorite Costco regional suppliers

Egg Nog French Toast

Darigold

2 cups Darigold egg nog
12 thick slices of dried firm white bread
8 tablespoons (1 stick) Darigold Butter

Pour egg nog into a shallow bowl and dip the bread slices into it, turning to coat both sides.

Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add 2–3 slices of the bread and fry until golden on both sides. Repeat with the remaining bread and butter.

Makes 6 servings.



PAID ADVERTISING



White Basmati Rice with Stir-Fried Vegetables

Amira food

1 cup Amira Premium Basmati Rice
1 teaspoon virgin olive oil
1 ounce each: diced carrot, broccoli florets, asparagus pieces, sliced zucchini, cherry tomatoes, diced bell pepper
1 ounce chopped sweet onion
1 teaspoon chopped garlic
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1 teaspoon vegetable broth powder
Salt and pepper

Soak rice in water to cover for 20 minutes; drain. Boil rice in 1¾ cups water, covered, for about 15 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

In a sauté pan, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add garlic and onion, stir-fry for 1-2 minutes, then add vegetables. Stir-fry for 30 seconds. Add ½ cup water. Dissolve cornstarch and vegetable powder in 5 tablespoons cold water; add to the vegetables. Cook until thickened. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve over rice.

Makes 2 servings.

Variation: Chicken, beef, or shrimp can be added to this dish.



Warm Brown Rice Miso Salad

Lundberg Family Farms

1 pound extra-firm tofu
Sesame ginger dressing
1 cup Lundberg Family Farms short grain brown rice
1 tablespoon rice vinegar
1 cup orange juice
1¼ cup vegetable stock, divided
2 tablespoons miso
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 cup mushrooms, diced
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
2 tablespoons cornstarch
Toasted sesame oil
Coarse black pepper
8 cups salad greens

Marinate tofu in dressing at least 4 hours.

Cook rice according to package directions.

In a saucepan, mix 1 tablespoon vinegar, juice, 1 cup stock, miso, soy sauce, mushrooms, garlic and ginger; bring to a boil. Mix cornstarch and remaining stock, add to saucepan and simmer until thickened.

Press tofu to remove moisture. Cut into 4 portions. Brush both sides with oil; season with pepper. Heat grill to medium-high. Brush cooking surface with 1 tablespoon oil and grill tofu for 5 minutes per side.

Arrange 2 cups of salad greens on each plate. Drizzle with dressing. Top with rice, tofu and sauce.

Makes 4 servings.



The pick of peppers



This Tabasco pepper mash will age for three years at Tabasco's Avery Island, Louisiana, warehouse.

Tablet or smartphone? Scan or click the image for a video about how Tabasco Red Pepper Sauce is made.



SUPPLIER PROFILE

Company: McIlhenny Company

Current employees: 200

Address: Avery Island, LA 70513

Website: www.tabasco.com

Products at Costco: Costco carries Tabasco Red Pepper Sauce (a few different pack sizes are available). In addition, Costco carries the Tabasco Green Jalapeño Sauce in the Costco Business Center locations.

Comments about Costco:

"McIlhenny Company Tabasco Brands continues a great partnership with Costco Wholesale since the Price Club days (more than 30 years). We both share a similar mission in providing Costco members and Tabasco consumers premium-quality products at a great value. Costco has been an excellent partner to mutually grow our businesses together."—Tim Faley, regional sales manager

It's a hot market, and Tabasco leads the field

By Fred Minnick

AS THE TABASCO tour guide gives me earplugs and a hairnet, he tells me in a pleasant Cajun drawl, "You're about to clear your sinuses."

The door swings open, and a light breeze carries the spicy and unmistakable Tabasco bouquet. My olfactory system burns. Soon I'm standing over a vat of sloshing pepper juice that is emanating vapors so strong I begin to understand why police carry pepper spray. I'm coughing and gasping, and my tear-filled eyes see only the person in front of me.

The quick look is over, and the muggy Louisiana air fills my lungs with welcome pepper-free oxygen. A few coughs later, my sinuses are indeed cleared—a formal welcome to Avery Island, Louisiana, a 2,200-acre private salt dome surrounded by bayous, and home to Tabasco since 1868.

The family

When New Orleans banker Edmund McIlhenny married Mary Eliza Avery in 1859, he unknowingly took the first step toward what would become, 150 years later, seven mainstay Tabasco flavors, a clothing line and hundreds of co-branded products.

Mary's father, Daniel Dudley Avery, owned a major sugarcane plantation on Petite Anse Island (now Avery Island) and gained even more wealth with salt mine discoveries during the Civil War.

Out of work after the Civil War, McIlhenny started experimenting with tabasco peppers on his father-in-law's plantation, mashing and mixing them with vinegar and salt. To this day, nobody knows exactly how McIlhenny obtained this Mexican-native pepper species, which grows its fruit upright and ripens at different intervals. But he started bottling his pepper sauce in used cologne bottles and giving to friends and family in 1868.

In 1869, he took 658 bottles of "Petite Anse Sauce" to sell in New Orleans. People were immediately taken with the flavor—a slightly floral and fruity nose with a powerful heat.

Production continued to grow. Twenty years later, McIlhenny manufactured 41,472 bottles of what was now simply labeled as "Tabasco" and used the railroad to ship to grocers throughout the United States. About 200 bottles were shipped to Europe.

McIlhenny brought aboard his sons—Rough Rider John and Arctic explorer Edward—forging a long family line that still runs the McIlhenny Company, the parent company of Tabasco.



Today's Tabasco

The fact that this is still a family-run company was especially apparent when longtime CEO Paul McIlhenny, whom employees affectionately referred to as Mr. Paul, passed away in February.

"Mr. Paul started work [as a pepper picker in 1967] when my mother and father were here," says Rita Floris, a 38-year Tabasco veteran. "It was like losing a family member."

Known for spilling hot sauce on his shirts so regularly that he wore bibs, Mr. Paul gave employees grammar lectures and specialized in the lost art of Cajun joke telling.

He was also very good at running the company.

Under McIlhenny's 13-year reign as CEO, Tabasco achieved 25 percent worldwide hot sauce market share; created a wide assortment of hot sauces, from Buffalo Style, Green Jalapeño, Chipotle, Habanero, Garlic Pepper and Sweet & Spicy to online- and gift-shop-only Raspberry Chipotle; and became a loud fashion statement, with its colorful shirts and ties. Tabasco also boosted its presence in grocery stores, co-branding with liquor, potato chip and ketchup companies.

"Paul was so prolific at making new products that we have a big stable of products," says CEO Anthony "Tony" Simmons, Mr. Paul's cousin and the seventh descendant of Edmund McIlhenny to run the company. "My job is to make sure they get the distribution."

Simmons says consumers discovering new ethnic foods are making the hot sauce pie bigger (according to a 2013 *Companies and Markets Report*, the spicy-sauces market grew 9 percent last year). People are also cooking with hot sauce and realizing it's not just an ingredient to "burn you up," he says. "It's become fashionable, especially for Southern chefs, that as soon as you become famous, you get your own hot sauce. But [those chefs] are still using Tabasco."

Maintaining continuity

Simmons has another important job: maintaining the quality and consistency of Tabasco sauce. The recipe has remained exactly the same since its inception (the lack of availability of French white

wine vinegar forced them to change to a domestic vinegar sometime after 1890).

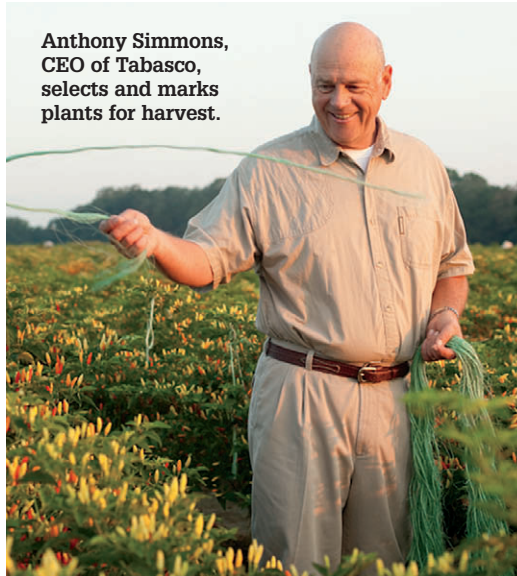
After the peppers are picked, they are mashed with beechwood vinegar and a touch of Avery Island-mined salt and stored in used Kentucky bourbon barrels for three years. Before the barrel contents move on to become Tabasco hot sauce, Simmons samples the three-year-old mash, looking for unpleasant aromas, off colors and need-to-be-retired barrels that push unwanted flavor notes into the mash. If something's off, he flips the barrelhead and warehouse crews fix the problem. This isn't typical CEO work: He just likes being physically connected to his family recipe.

"There's an art to making this product, and a significant amount of family involvement," Simmons says.

Despite receiving monthly acquisition offers, the 130 all-family Tabasco shareholders don't plan to sell anytime soon. Could a non-McIlhenny descendant take the heat? This writer certainly couldn't. [E]

Fred Minnick is the author of Whiskey Women (Potomac Books, 2013; available at select Costco locations).

Anthony Simmons, CEO of Tabasco, selects and marks plants for harvest.



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The PIONEER Woman

Ree Drummond

MARLBORO MAN

Accidental country girl turned accidental Food Network star

By Hana Medina

HOT OFF THE plane from her latest children's book tour, Ree Drummond (aka "The Pioneer Woman") is as gracious by phone as she seems in her award-winning blog (thepioneerwoman.com), her top-selling books and her popular Food Network show. She'd been back on her family's cattle ranch for only an hour when *The Connection* caught up with her. Despite her admission that she was hungry and fantasizing about her next meal, her humble nature shined through as she answered several questions from this reporter, who just can't get enough of her pumpkin-spice muffin recipe.

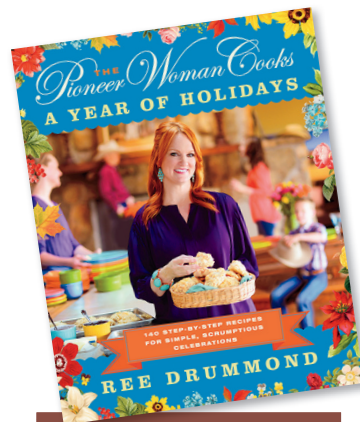
A top name in popular food media, Drummond says she aspired to be Jane Pauley one day and a child psychiatrist the next as she grew up in suburban Bartlesville, Oklahoma. She may not have known what life had in store for her, but she followed her big-city dreams to Los Angeles for college and began a professional career working for a marketing firm.

On a brief trip back home, she had a chance meeting at a bar with her future husband, Ladd, and decided to stay. They eventually married and moved

to his operating cattle ranch outside of Pawhuska, Oklahoma, nearly 60 miles north of Tulsa, where she became "an accidental country girl"—the premise of her "Pioneer Woman" alter ego. While she credits her culinary and entertaining skills to her mother and mother-in-law, Drummond says she learned "carnivorous cooking" from her husband, because she was actually a vegetarian when they met (which didn't last much longer).

Garnering tens of millions of hits each month, The Pioneer Woman blog began in 2006 as a place to share Drummond's budding photography skills with family and friends. Despite being known for her culinary prowess, she didn't focus her writing on the kitchen until eight months into launching the site. "I started sharing things I was cooking, and [that] part of my blog really took off, partly because of the step-by-step photos I posted," Drummond says. "I did that because that's just the way I like to learn things. I'm very visual."

Today, her blog details life on the ranch, and, of course, all the traditional homemade goodies she feeds her four kids (ages 9 to 16) and her husband.



The Costco Connection

The Pioneer Woman Cooks: A Year of Holidays is available in most Costco locations.

She still snaps and edits every image that appears on her site and in her cookbooks.

Fans of Drummond's site, mostly hailing from urban and suburban locales, are drawn by her seemingly romantic ranch life, while her conversational writing style, cooking instructions and lighthearted daily musings keep them coming back for more.

A 2007 Weblog (aka "Blogger") Award caught the attention of book publishers and resulted in several book deals with HarperCollins: three cookbooks, a memoir about her love story with Ladd and an ongoing children's book series about her family's hound dog Charlie. Not to mention, she somehow finds time to home-school her four children.

When Food Network rang in 2009, it took a few years, but she decided there was no harm in giving it a shot. *The Pioneer Woman* first aired in 2011 and has been on Food Network ever since. The show, she says, is an extension of her blog, featuring instructional cooking segments and scenes of her family's life on the ranch.

Organized by holiday, her latest cookbook, *The Pioneer Woman Cooks: A Year of Holidays*, features her favorite meals, yet is versatile enough to crack open any day of the year. Her make-ahead tips, which she uses to keep her family's holidays running smoothly,

"I do say that my cinnamon rolls are the best cinnamon rolls on the planet. It's been scientifically proven."

—Ree Drummond

help simplify the daunting task of preparing a feast. "It's hard for one person to pull off a huge spread of food in a few hours, and that was one thing I really wanted to get across in the book. Giving people examples of things they could do well in advance just makes it so much easier," she says.

As one would expect of a famous foodie, edible gifts are a holiday pastime. She's upheld

her mother's tradition of giving homemade, ready-to-heat cinnamon rolls (see recipe). "I don't try to say that all my recipes are the best version of what they are, but I do say that my cinnamon rolls are the best cinnamon rolls on the planet. It's been scientifically proven. I have independent verification of this," she laughs. "But I can't take all the credit because they started with my mom."

When asked what's next for the Pioneer Woman, she says she is preparing to write and photograph her fourth cookbook, while continuing to film her TV show, update her blog and raise her family. She says, "I don't have any big frontiers that I want to tackle or haven't tackled. I'm just happy with what I'm doing." 📺



Tablet or smartphone?

Scan or click here for more recipes from Drummond's new cookbook. (See page 5 for scanning details.)

Caramel Apple Sweet Rolls

Note: Make Basic Dough prior to making Caramel Apple Rolls. You'll need only half the dough to make the rolls, so you can reserve the other half for a second batch, or use it for Drummond's Hot Cross Buns recipe in her new cookbook.

BASIC DOUGH

- 4 cups whole milk
- 1 cup canola oil
- 1 cup sugar
- 9 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 packages (2¼ teaspoons each) active dry yeast
- 1 heaping teaspoon baking powder
- 1 scant teaspoon baking soda
- 1 tablespoon salt

Combine the milk and canola oil in a large pot. Add the sugar and stir. Scald the mixture (heat it to almost a boil), then turn off the heat. Let the mixture cool until it's warm, but not too warm. Add 8 cups of the flour along with the yeast, and stir until it's all combined. It'll be super sticky, but just have faith! Cover the mixture with the lid of the pot or a dish towel and let it sit for an hour or so, until it's risen.

After it's had a chance to rise, sprinkle in the remaining cup of flour, the baking powder, the baking soda and the salt, and stir gently to combine. It takes a little while to get it stirred together.



DOUGH

½ batch Basic Dough

FILLING

- 4 Granny Smith apples
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter, plus more for greasing the pans
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

CARAMEL ICING

- ½ cup (1 stick) butter
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Make the caramel apple filling:

Dice the apples pretty finely, then throw them in a skillet over medium-high heat and stir them around to cook. After 3 to 4 minutes, when they've gotten nice and golden brown, remove them to a plate.

Throw a stick of butter and the brown sugar into the same skillet over medium heat, and stir it around until the butter is melted and the sugar is dissolved. Pour in the cream, then stir it around and let it bubble up and thicken for about a minute. Turn the heat down to low, then return the apples to the skillet and sprinkle on the cinnamon. Stir the mixture and let it thicken for another 1 to 2 minutes, then spoon it into a bowl to cool.

Make the rolls: Preheat the oven to 375 F and roll out the dough in a rectangle about 10 x 30 inches. Spoon the caramel apples over the dough and use your fingers to spread them evenly over the surface. Roll the dough toward you into a nice, tight roll and pinch the seam when you get to the end. Turn the seam over so that it's face down against the countertop.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF REE DRUMMOND

Slice the dough into rolls ½ to ¾ inch thick. Grease 3 round, disposable foil cake pans with butter. Place 7 to 8 rolls in each pan, being careful not to crowd them. Set aside to rise in a warm place for 20 to 25 minutes. Bake for 15 to 18 minutes, or until they're nice and golden brown.

Make the Caramel Icing: While the rolls are baking, melt a stick of butter in a saucepan over medium heat and add the brown sugar. Let it melt, then whisk in the cream. Cook for 2 minutes, whisking constantly, then remove from the heat. Sift in the powdered sugar and salt, and stir until you have a smooth icing.

Remove the rolls from the oven and immediately spoon a good amount of icing over the top. Use a knife to spread it evenly and watch it slowly seep into the cracks and crevices. Makes about 30 rolls.

Basic Dough and Caramel Apple Sweet Rolls recipes from The Pioneer Woman Cooks: A Year of Holidays (William Morrow Cookbooks, 2013)

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Click or scan here to see how Vanity Fair® adds a special touch to everyday meals and snacks (see page 5).

Pick and
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popular
produce



Cold-weather veggies

MEDIA BAKERY

By Holly Brown

WINTERTIME DOESN'T mean you can't still spruce up your recipes with hearty, healthy and beautiful additions to your table. Learn how to select, store and serve nature's bounty for everyday dining and holiday entertaining.

Asparagus

Asparagus, like onions and garlic, is related to the lily family. Asparagus adds bright, slightly acidic flavor to your recipes, and loads of potassium and fiber for your body. Choose asparagus with tightly closed tips. Stalks should be bright green and firm. Keep for up to five days wrapped in a damp cloth, placed in a paper bag and stored in the produce drawer of your refrigerator. Be sure to cut off the woody ends of your asparagus before cooking. It's tasty roasted or fried, but asparagus is especially delicious wrapped in prosciutto and puff pastry, and then baked.



Broccoli

Broccoli is a superfood that's loaded with vitamins A and C, as well as calcium, potassium and iron. Choose broccoli with tight, compact florets and a dark green stalk. Store broccoli unwashed in a plastic bag for five to 10 days in the vegetable compartment of your refrigerator. To freeze, cut florets and stems, then blanch them for three to four minutes. Rinse in cold water, let dry and place in an airtight container. Fresh broccoli tastes great eaten raw; just be sure to soak the head (or florets, if purchased pre-cut) upside down in cold,



salted water to remove debris. Broccoli also is delicious steamed with butter and salt, or in dishes that allow the delicate florets to soak up a yummy sauce, such as sweet-and-sour or peanut.

Butternut squash

Butternut squash looks intimidating on the outside, but it's a sweet, meaty and versatile veggie. Select a whole squash that's heavy for its size, with the stem intact. The skin should be smooth, matte and uniform in color. Store whole squash in a cool, dark place for up to a month, but don't refrigerate. Pre-cut and cubed butternut squash should always be refrigerated. The simplest way to cook a whole butternut squash is to slice it in half lengthwise, scoop out the seeds and place the halves face down on a baking sheet. The skin can be removed before or after roasting.



Alternatively, toss pre-cut squash on a baking sheet with olive oil, salt and pepper. Cook squash until tender. Pump up your pasta, soups and stews with roasted butternut squash. It's a tasty way to get a generous dose of vitamins A and C.


French beans

French green beans, or *haricots verts* in French, are an elegant addition to your holiday menu and your vitamin count. They're full of vitamins A, C, K and folate. Select crisp, bright green beans that snap easily when bent. French beans can be stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for



up to five days. Blanch green beans and toss them into a salad, or sauté with olive oil, sea salt and sliced almonds for a quick side dish.

Snap peas

Snap peas pack a powerful punch of protein and fiber in a compact pod. Typically eaten whole, these peas are succulent, sweet and crunchy. Select snap peas that are fresh and bright green. They lose their crispy snap as they age. Refrigerate in a plastic bag for up to five days. Eat them with dip as a quick snack, or toss the pods into a stir-fry. 

Holly Brown is the publisher and Web TV host of thebrownlounge.com.

The Costco Connection

Costco offers fresh French beans, asparagus, butternut squash, snap peas and broccoli, as well as other fresh and frozen produce.

Costco's French beans and asparagus can last up to 15 days, depending on the sell date, if kept in the atmosphere-controlled bags in which they're sold. Costco currently carries pre-cut butternut squash in cubes. Costco's broccoli is conveniently pre-cut into florets.



Tablet or smartphone?

Scan or click here for printable recipes using each of the vegetables above. (See page 5 for scanning details.)



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Sneaky symptoms

Don't keep these health concerns to yourself

By Lisa Mulcahy

EXPERIENCING AN OUT-of-left-field health concern? Don't panic, but don't keep it to yourself. Tell your doctor.

Costco member Carol Shilson's health mystery started with some stomach upset. "Then I suddenly started experiencing joint pain, swelling—I couldn't bend my elbows to pick up my young nephew," she recalls. "I was also suffering crazy fatigue, plus numbness of my fingers and toes."

Shilson wisely sought medical attention and discovered she had celiac disease—a severe reaction to gluten. The moral of Shilson's story? Never assume a strange health occurrence that comes out of nowhere is harmless. *The Costco Connection* asked some of the country's top physicians to outline uncommon symptoms that can be serious, and that they want their patients to tell them about ASAP.

Sudden hearing loss

It's Saturday night—out of the blue, you're deaf in your left ear. You figure it's blocked earwax, so you wiggle your ear—but you still can't hear. You'll call your doc on Monday, right?

"No. Head to the emergency room," says Michael D. Seidman, M.D., director of otologic/neurotologic surgery at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. "Most cases of sudden hearing loss turn out to be idiopathic, meaning we never know why they happen, and hearing does return. However, this can also be a presenting symptom of a tumor, or mean you could be having a stroke."

The National Stroke Association says other sudden symptoms that could indicate a stroke or transient ischemic attack (mini-stroke) include difficulty seeing out of one or both eyes; numbness or weakness on one side; trouble walking, talking or understanding words; and severe headache. Many of these symptoms can be confused with benign conditions such as migraine, but don't take a chance: If you experience any of these symptoms as briefly as 30 seconds to 10 minutes, call 911.

Lines across your fingernails

Have you noticed skinny red to brown marks running in the direction your nails grow? They could be splinter hemorrhages. "They can indicate endocarditis, an infection

of the heart valves," explains Nieca Goldberg, M.D., director of the Women's Heart Program at New York University Langone Medical Center in New York City. "Other symptoms that may indicate this condition include chills, fatigue and shortness of breath."

Gasping for air

In the event of breathing difficulties, when should you worry? "Whenever you're doing your normal level of activity or exercise and experience a change, such as realizing you're quite out of breath, call your doctor immediately," urges Anne B. Curtis, M.D., chair of the department of medicine at the University of Buffalo in Buffalo, New York.

Causes of shortness of breath can range from low blood pressure to asthma to a heart attack or pulmonary embolism, according to the Mayo Clinic. It's impossible to know the potential severity of this problem unless you get it checked out.

Blood during a bathroom visit

If you notice blood in your stool, or even a bit of blood on toilet tissue after a bowel movement, don't ignore it. "This could be a sign of cancer," says Jacqueline L. Wolf, associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. "It could also be something less alarming, like hemorrhoids; a condition like diverticulitis, especially if the blood is bright red; or colitis. You should always tell your doctor if you see signs of anal bleeding."

Canker sores

You probably figure you bit the inside of your mouth while chewing food, but canker sores can also be a little-known sign of celiac disease, explains Costco member Stefano Guandalini, M.D., founder and medical director of the University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center. He says, "There are many unexpected symptoms that indicate celiac. The good news is you can be diagnosed starting with a simple blood test, then begin the process of eliminating your symptoms with a gluten-free diet."

Shilson knows that when it comes to feeling better, knowledge is power: Following her treatment, she's feeling great and imparts what she's learned as the Celiac Disease Center's executive director. "I think any time you have a weird symptom, the key is to trust your gut," she explains. "Don't think you're being a hypochondriac. Press for a diagnosis; you know your body best." **G**

Lisa Mulcahy is an internationally established writer, and a best-selling author.



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Mesothelioma awareness

MALIGNANT MESOTHELIOMA is a cancer that starts in the mesothelial cells, which are found in the linings of certain parts of the body, especially the chest or abdomen. This type of cancer is rare, with about 3,000 new cases diagnosed each year. The majority of those cases can be traced to workplace exposure to asbestos.

Asbestos is a heat-resistant fibrous silicate mineral that has been mined for commercial use in North America since the late 1800s, with use increasing during World War II. It has been a common insulating, fireproofing or soundproofing material in many industries, including construction, automobile manufacturing and shipbuilding, and was found in gardening and insulation products containing vermiculite until the 1990s.

The disease can take from 20 to 50 years after exposure to asbestos before it shows obvious symptoms, including:

- Shortness of breath
- Weight loss
- Chronic pain near the tumor

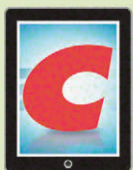
The outlook for patients with this cancer depends on how early the disease is detected and how aggressively it is treated. Often, by the time diagnosis is made, the disease has progressed to a point where patients do not respond well to conventional treatment—surgery, radiation and chemotherapy. A major goal of treatment is to reduce pain and suffering and prolong a patient's life with the highest quality of life possible.

Smoking alone is not linked to mesothelioma, but smokers who are exposed to asbestos have a much higher chance of developing asbestos lung cancer.

To learn more about this disease, visit these resources:

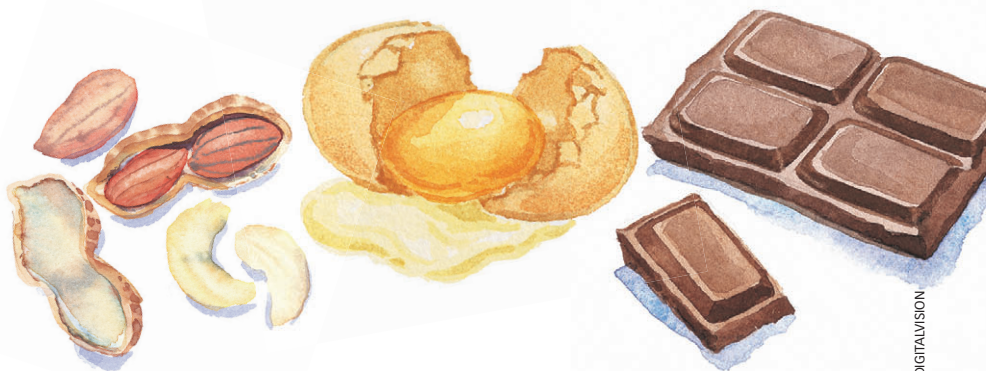
- Mesothelioma Cancer Alliance, www.mesothelioma.com
- National Cancer Institute, www.cancer.gov, search "mesothelioma"
- American Cancer Society, www.cancer.org, search "mesothelioma"

—David Wight



Tablet or smartphone?
Scan or click here to see a video about a seven-year survivor of malignant mesothelioma. (See page 5.)

HEALTHY EATING



DIGITALVISION

Surprisingly healthy foods

Rethinking what's good and bad for you

By Kristin Kirkpatrick

WHEN YOU ENVISION foods that might wreck your diet or sabotage your health, what pops into your mind? Chances are the list includes options that could actually help you reduce stress, prevent heart disease and ward off certain cancers. Unfortunately, though, once a food gets labeled as bad for your health, it never seems to lose that description, despite numerous studies that may contradict previous claims. What if you could enjoy some of your old favorites again (in sensible amounts, of course)? Here are six foods to consider adding back to your diet.

Chocolate

Old thinking: *It's so good, it has to be bad.*

Dark chocolate (with a cocoa content of at least 70 percent) is loaded with flavonoids, the same beneficial compounds found in berries, red wine and tea. An ounce of chocolate a day has been shown to reduce risks for heart disease, and an ounce and a half daily may help reduce emotional stress.

Coffee

Old thinking: *Coffee will harm your growth and bone density.*

Actually, studies show that the more coffee we sip, the more benefits we enjoy. Regular consumption of coffee has been associated with a lowered risk of developing diabetes, as well as cancers of the mouth, endometrium, prostate and skin. Coffee consumption has even been associated with a decreased risk of dementia and Alzheimer's.

Eggs

Old thinking: *Eggs will raise cholesterol and your chances of developing heart disease.*

Eggs are loaded with antioxidants, protein and nutrients vital to good health. A 2011 study found that regular egg consumption may be associated with reductions in the risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer due to

their high antioxidant content. Additional studies have found that eggs may help reduce blood pressure. Further, new research out of Yale University has found that eggs can be incorporated into a heart-healthy diet without negative effects on cholesterol, weight or endothelial function.

Nuts

Old thinking: *Nuts are fattening.*

The truth is that any food consumed in too great a quantity will cause weight gain. However, the protein and healthy fats found in nuts may actually help you lose weight. According to several studies, in addition to weight loss, eating nuts has been associated with reducing the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Potatoes

Old thinking: *Potatoes are fattening.*

Potatoes may actually play a role in reducing the risk of a silent killer. A 2012 study found that purple potatoes helped lower blood pressure in hypertensive, obese individuals without causing weight gain. Additionally, potatoes are naturally high in fiber and contain virtually no fat.

Soy

Old thinking: *Eating soy increases your risk for certain cancers.*

While the newest controversy is associated with genetically modified soy, numerous research studies looking at isoflavones and protein in whole soy sources demonstrate the vast benefits associated with this legume. Highlights include reduction in cancers of the breast, prostate and colon and improvement in heart health. [4]

Costco member Kristin Kirkpatrick is the manager of wellness nutrition services at the Cleveland Clinic Wellness Institute (<http://myclevelandclinic.org>).

Kids' Pick!



Lindsay Bubitz, assistant buyer, books

LEARNING IS ENHANCED by doing. So this month, Costco is pleased to feature an assortment from the **Build the** series, perfect for young readers who like to learn with their hands as well as their minds. Each unique set includes a colorfully illustrated book full of facts and stories about a fascinating subject, as well as everything they'll need to build their own model that stands 2½ feet tall. Budding space enthusiasts will learn about spacecraft and can build a model rocket from the ground up with **Build the Rocket**. Have fun learning about what we are made of and construct a skeleton with **Build the Human Body**. Explore one of the most fearsome predators in the ocean and put together a great white with **Build the Shark**, and look for **Build the T.Rex** too.



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1



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2



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Carson Dellosa

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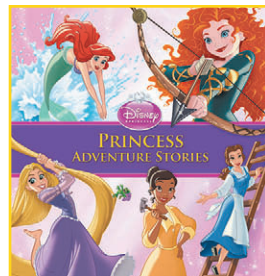
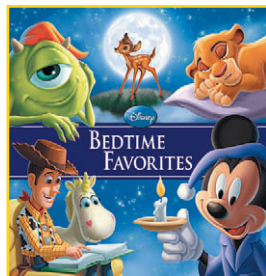
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Costco has all of the books that are certain to become illustrated family favorites. The magic of the holiday season is brought to life with favorite Disney characters in a second edition of a hugely popular title—**Disney Christmas Storybook Collection**. The most beloved Disney princesses show their courageous spirits as they each face challenges in **Princess Adventure Stories**. And ease the little ones to dreamland with **Disney Bedtime Stories** and **Princess Bedtime Stories**.



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Sound of success

Author exhibits the art of writing bestsellers

By Kirsti Sharratt

"A VERY AVERAGE student" is how Jan-Philipp Sendker, author of *The Art of Hearing Heartbeats*, describes himself during his early schooldays. "One of my strengths—perhaps my only strength—was I could tell stories," he recalls. "On a Monday morning, when my class shared tales about the weekend, I would make everyone laugh, and obviously I liked the attention as a small kid. Maybe that started my dream of becoming a novelist."

As well as being a natural raconteur, Sendker was an avid reader. "Every book was like a window to a new world," he says. "I was a day-dreamer, too. At school, I would look outside and imagine I was the hero, or whatever. That's basically what I do now; the difference is that I write it down."

Sendker, 53, became editor and publisher of the school newspaper and went on to university—but for only two days. "I found it incredibly boring," he says. "I told my father I wanted to write books, and he asked, 'About what?' I then realized I was probably too young to write novels and should live a bit and suffer my first love."

So the budding writer, who was born and raised in Hamburg, Germany, became a journalist and was hired by *Stern*, a leading German weekly magazine. He was its American correspondent from 1990 to 1995, then its Asian correspondent until 1999. He visited Myanmar (then known as Burma) on assignment in 1995, and it was that three-week-long trip that motivated him to write his first novel.

"As a journalist, I had the privilege of traveling the world. I interviewed Madonna, Michael Jordan,


Dustin Hoffman—many famous people—and I visited very poor places, such as terrible slums in Haiti," he tells *The Connection*. "What I learned from the people of Burma was it doesn't really matter whether you have a small hut or a big house: As humans we have much more in common than what makes us different. That was such a valuable lesson."

Sendker, who has been back to Myanmar several times, took a three-year sabbatical, from 1999 to 2002, to focus on his writing. Inspiration came from his son Jonathan, then only 2 years old. He says, "We were living in New York and playing in the yard. He put his hand on my chest and said he could hear a strange boom-boom-boom noise. I toyed with the idea: How would it be if someone could hear heartbeats from afar? How does your heart sound when you're happy or depressed or in love or full of anger?"

Sendker, who now lives near Berlin with his wife and three children, didn't have a master plan for the story: "I had determined the main characters, the setting [Kalaw, in Myanmar] and the emotional hook. I wanted to write a passionate and unique love story and to put into it all I had learned about love and life."

The Art of Hearing Heartbeats was published in Germany in 2002. It has since been translated into 30 languages and has sold more than a million copies worldwide. "I find it incredible to hear how readers around the world have responded to the story," Sendker says. "It seems to have had the ability to touch people wherever they are."

A sequel, *A Well-Tempered Heart*, is scheduled for release in America and the UK in January. "When I was sitting in a teahouse in Kalaw, doing research for the movie script of *The Art of Hearing Heartbeats*, I imagined my character Julia Win walking down the road and thought: How's she doing now?" says Sendker. "I couldn't forget about her, so I called my publisher about a sequel."

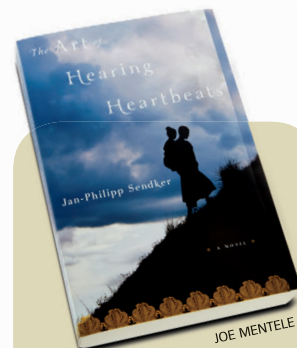
After *The Art of Hearing Heartbeats*, Sendker wrote the first two novels of a trilogy set in China, and he is about to begin the third. "The Chinese culture is still very foreign to us, and it's important that we know more about it," he maintains. "I think we learn the most from the stories we hear. As you will have figured out by now, I'm a strong believer in the power of storytelling." 

Kirsti Sharratt is a Scotland-based writer.



Jan-Philipp Sendker

SIGRID ROTHE



I NEVER THOUGHT I'd wish I knew German, but this month's Book Buyer's Pick changed my mind. Jan-Philipp Sendker's *The Art of Hearing Heartbeats* is so beautiful and moving in translation that I can only believe the original is even more enchanting. I loved the title from the moment I saw it. I mean, who hasn't leaned in to hear a beating heart and marveled at the gift of life?

The book begins with a man abandoning his wife and daughter. While searching for clues to her father's disappearance, the daughter, Julia, finds an old love letter that launches a search that ends in Burma. What she discovers there is a story laced with hardship, resilience and love, all wrapped in a lush layer of spirituality.

Look for the sequel, *A Well-Tempered Heart*, in most Costco warehouses in mid-January.

For more book picks, see page 63.



Pennie Clark Iannicciello,
Costco book buyer

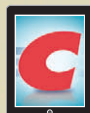
FRANCE FREEMAN

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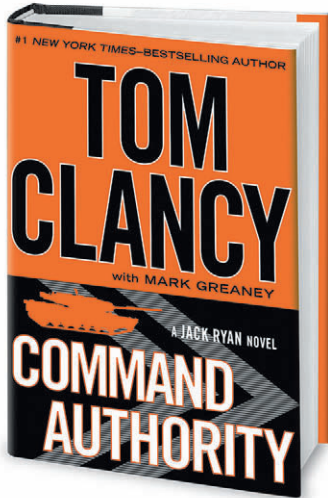
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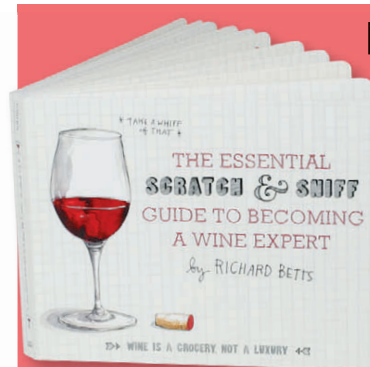
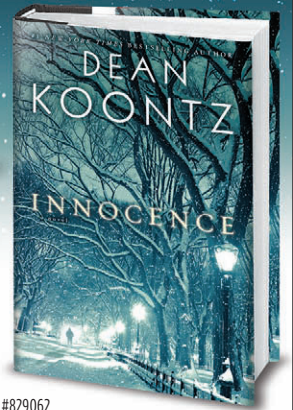
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from Mr. Koontz's
imagination." —*Kirkus Reviews*

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Innocence is a totally new and imaginative thriller from best-selling author Dean Koontz.

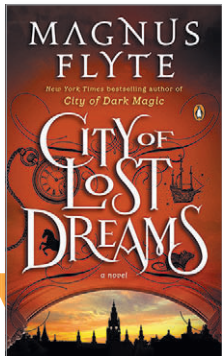
Bantam | hardcover | fiction | on sale December 10 | Item #829062



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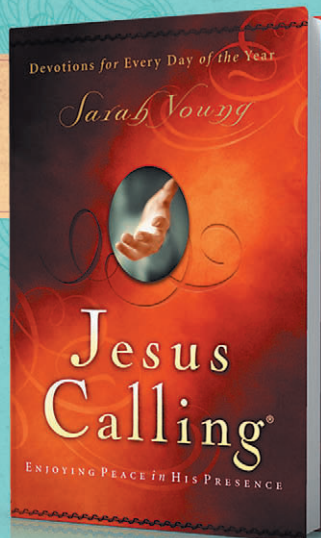


The search
for an ancient
alchemical cure

The highly anticipated sequel to the exhilarating, best-selling novel *City of Dark Magic* has arrived. Musicologist Sarah Weston must travel deep into an ancient mystery in order to save the people she loves in the action-packed *City of Lost Dreams*.

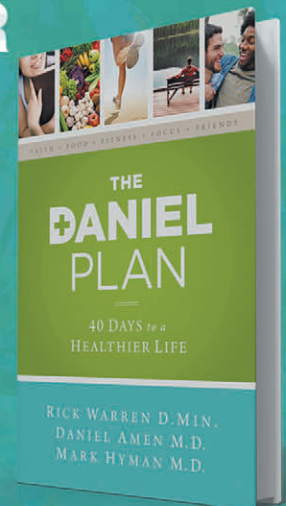
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Finding faith

By Will Fifield

THOUGH SHE'S SOLD more than 10 million books worldwide, you've probably never heard of Sarah Young. She's no media darling. Instead, she quietly writes devotional books, and has become a trusted voice to millions of readers on a spiritual journey toward knowing God. Her books include the best-selling *Jesus Calling*; *Jesus Today*, the 2013 Evangelical Christian Publishers Association Christian Book of the Year; *Jesus Calling for Kids*, *Jesus Calling Bible Storybook* and *Jesus Lives*.



Sarah Young

Since reading was an integral part of Young's path to faith, perhaps it's fitting that she influences so many through her writing. She says she took her first steps toward faith after reading Francis Schaeffer's *Escape from Reason* while she was a philosophy major at Wellesley College in the 1970s.

"Each time I began studying a new philosophy I'd get excited, thinking this one might end my quest," Young tells *The Connection*, while visiting extended family in preparation for moving to a home in Nashville. "When I read [Schaeffer's] *Escape from Reason*, my background in philosophy helped me understand his reasoning. I found in that book answers to questions I had previously considered unanswerable."

After reading *Escape*, Young lived and studied at L'Abri, a Christian community in Switzerland established by Schaeffer and his wife, Edith, in 1955. For Young, L'Abri, named after the French word for shelter, was truly a haven. "The combination of intellectual integrity and a caring Christian community was just what I needed," she says. "I left L'Abri with a solid foundation on which to build my life."

Young's devotionals are written in the first person, as though God himself is speaking to readers. While she is quick to point out that the Bible provides the foundation for her life and her writing, and that her devotionals aren't divinely inspired the way the Bible is, she spends time in prayer and in quiet communion with God before writing. She describes the process as a matter of listening and writing, and continually asking God to guide her through the process.

"Of course, I don't have audible conversation with Jesus," Young says. "It's a quiet and personal time of praying, pondering Scripture and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit." She also believes that her ongoing struggles with ill health—she's suffered many years with Lyme disease and chronic dizziness—have added depth to her writing.

"I want *all* readers to be blessed, helped and encouraged through the readings, but those who are suffering have a special place in my heart," she says. Thus, comforting passages such as "Whenever you look for Me, You will find Me. My Promise to be with you always endures that you never have to face anything alone," which appears on page 108 of the 2012 edition of *Jesus Today*, abound in her writing.

Young says that she is convinced that God is always communicating with people, and in a lot of different ways. But she's quick to add that seekers need to look for Him. "I've found that having a thankful, trusting attitude helps us discover Him and His blessings in our lives," she says. "I have emphasized the importance of trust and thankfulness in my writing, and I hope this emphasis helps readers recognize the presence of God in various aspects of their lives. Scripture assures us that 'In Him we live and move and have our being.'"

Young is currently working on a new writing project, a full-year devotional written in the same format as *Jesus Calling*. "I've heard countless stories about how amazingly well a specific reading in *Jesus Calling* matched a reader's current circumstances," she says. "I wanted to write one more full-year devotional, and I'm slowly working on the project."

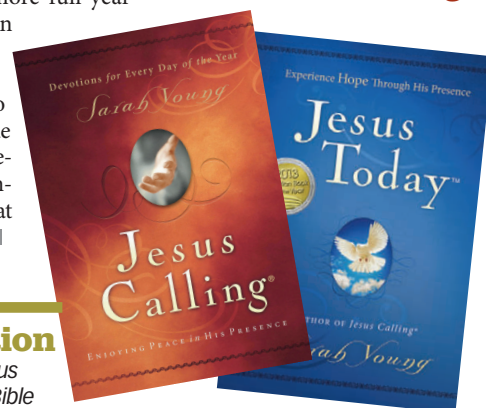
"I never imagined that God would use *Jesus Calling* to impact so many people," Young says. "I continue to be thankful and amazed by this phenomenon! I consider it both a responsibility and a great privilege to pray at length each morning for readers." ☞

The Costco Connection

You'll find copies of *Jesus Calling*, *Jesus Today*, *Jesus Lives* and *Jesus Calling Bible Storybook* at most Costco warehouses.

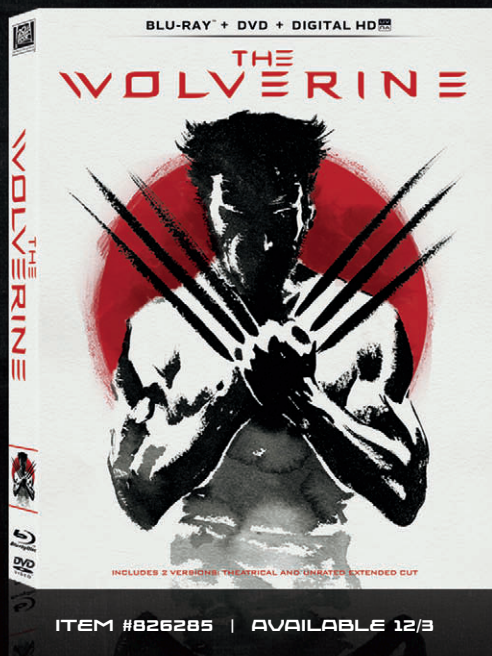
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—Sarah Young



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December

Book staff picks

NONFICTION

***All the Songs: The Story Behind Every Beatles Release*, by Philippe Margotin and Jean-Michel Guesdon.** My dad loves my mom, his kids and the Beatles—and I'd rather not find out in which order. Whether you read this book from front to back or dip in at your favorite song and move around from there, *All the Songs* offers a fascinating way to experience the music of the Fab Four, with a glimpse into the genesis, production and technical details. Take my dad's favorite Beatles song, "Blackbird," for example. Did you know that it was inspired by a piece of music by Johann Sebastian Bach? That the percussion you hear is Paul McCartney's tapping foot? Or, that the underlying theme of the song is support for civil-rights struggles, especially for women? Do I even need to say that this is the ideal gift for any Beatles fan?

—Shana Lind-Stowers, assistant buyer, books

***The Miracle Ball Method: Relieve Your Pain, Reshape Your Body, Reduce Your Stress*, by Elaine Petrone.** I'm new to the book department, and part of getting settled in has involved talk of buyers' and members' favorite books. I've heard so many good reviews of *The Miracle Ball Method* that I had to check it out. Petrone, a dancer who faced a career-ending injury, shows how proper breathing works in conjunction with a range of "unexercises" that call for placing the balls wherever there's pain—neck, back, legs, etc.—and then resting, rolling or rotating on them. Members get a book and two grapefruit-size, squishy balls. Petrone has me believing in miracles.

—Alex Zennan, assistant buyer, books

FICTION

***The Gods of Guilt*, by Michael Connelly.** It might sound odd, but one of the ways I stay in the holiday spirit without getting burned out is to read something that's as different from the holidays as it can get. I've already set my sights on this new thriller from Connelly. When District Attorney Mickey Haller gets a text referring to California's penal code for murder, Haller knows he'll have to be at the top of his game. The victim was a former client, a prostitute he thought he had rescued and put on the straight and narrow. Far from saving her, Haller may have been the one who put her in danger. Haller must work tirelessly and bring all his skill to bear on a case that could mean his ultimate redemption—or proof of his ultimate guilt.

—Beth Alley, ICS, media

***Innocence*, by Dean Koontz.** Like many readers, I thrill at discovering a new voice. But you know what? There's nothing like the comfort of a time-tested favorite author. Enter Dean Koontz. In this fast-paced, stand-alone new read, a man lives below the city, an exile from a society that would destroy him given the chance. A woman lives a life in seclusion, hiding from enemies who would harm her if they ever caught her. Once the two are brought together by something more than chance, their bond runs deeper than the tragedies that have scarred them. Koontz gives strong proof that he should remain at the top of must-read lists.—Chris Burns, ICS, books

JUVENILE

***Santa Is Coming* series, by Steve Smallman.** This month, children from Alaska to Connect-

icut and from Hawaii to Florida are readying themselves for a visit from Santa Claus. This series personalizes Santa's adventures as each book imagines his visits to one state, where he and the reindeer fly over (and sometimes run into) famous landmarks such as the Statue of Liberty, the Hollywood sign or Millennium Park. Each book also mentions the man in red's travels between various cities in that state. Whether a child lives in Breezy Point, Minnesota, or Muncie, Indiana, he or she can rest easier Christmas Eve, knowing that Santa will indeed be making an appearance in everyone's hometown. (Titles in this series will be available regionally.)

—Scott Losse, ICS, books



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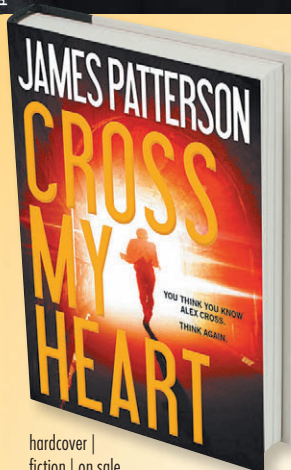
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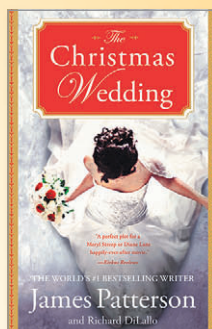
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For the romance lover

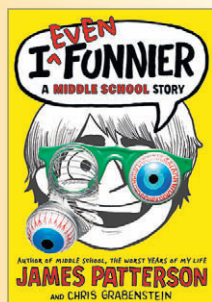
Gaby Summerhill's family hasn't celebrated Christmas together since her husband died, three years ago. Now she's hoping a holiday wedding will finally bring them together again. With all the emotional twists of a Patterson thriller, *The Christmas Wedding* is a fresh look at family and the magic of the season.



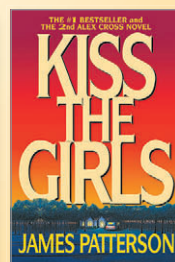
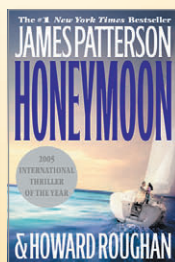
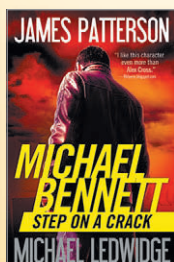
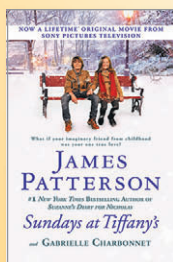
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For the young and young-at-heart

Don't miss Patterson's follow-up to his best-seller *I Funny*. Middle schooler Jamie Grimm dreams of being the best stand-up comic in the world—and he won't let the fact that he's wheelchair-bound stand in his way in the touching middle-grade novel *I Even Funnier*.



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Blu-rays for the holidays

Reviews by Steve Fisher

WHETHER YOU celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa or Festivus, gift-giving is usually part of the celebration. Some great entertainment is available on Blu-ray at Costco in December, and at least one person on your list might be happily surprised by one of these.

Mary Poppins 50th Anniversary (12/10). Released from the Disney vault in celebration of its 50th anniversary, the beloved classic looks brand-new, with an all-new digital restoration. For the rare person who has never seen it, the movie—based on a series of popular books by P.L. Travers—tells the story of a magical nanny who literally flies out of the windy London skies and into the home of two mischievous children. With the help of a carefree chimney sweep named Bert (Dick Van Dyke), the spirited nanny turns every chore into a game and every day into a, as the song says, “Jolly Holiday.” Winner of five Academy Awards, including Best Actress (Julie Andrews), Best Song (“Chim Chim Cher-ee”) and Best Visual Effects, *Mary Poppins* is a must-see for young and old. Extras include two new bonus features and four new songs. **G.**

Despicable Me 2 (Also in 3D, 12/10).

Former super-villain Gru (voiced by Steve Carell) is trying to lead an honest life and be a good single dad to his three young wards. He is approached by Lucy (Kristen Wiig), an agent for the Anti-Villain League, to recruit him in their fight against a new super-villain. And, of course, the Minions are along to add to the mad-cap fun. A funny and entertaining film for the whole family—with plenty of slapstick fun for all, witty banter for the older kids and adults, and one of the sweetest endings for an animated film I’ve ever seen. Be sure to sit

through the end credits for more Minion fun, and three included mini-movies feature the little yellow imps for additional wacky mayhem. **PG.**

Prisoners (12/17). How far would you go to protect your family? Keller Dover (Hugh Jackman) is facing every parent’s worst nightmare. His 6-year-old daughter, Anna, and her young friend, Joy, are missing, and as minutes turn to hours, panic sets in. The only lead is a dilapidated RV that had earlier been parked on their street. Heading the investigation, Detective Loki (Jake Gyllenhaal) arrests its driver, Alex Jones (Paul Dano), but a lack of evidence forces his release. As the police pursue multiple leads and pressure mounts, knowing his child’s life is at stake, the frantic Dover decides he has no choice but to take matters into his own hands. But just how far will this desperate father go to protect his family? You’ll be asking yourself the same question. Be warned: The film contains violent content, including torture, and language. **R.**

Elysium (12/17). The year is 2154. The extremely wealthy live on a luxurious space station. Everyone else resides on a decimated Earth, monitored by robotic police and living a desperate existence. An ex-con (Matt Damon), after being exposed to radiation, takes on a mission to Elysium, where special machines exist that can cure all illnesses and injuries, and could bring equality to the polarized worlds. South African director Neill Blomkamp, who scored a surprise hit with 2009’s *District 9*, a sci-fi twist on apartheid, says this view of a dystopian Earth in 2154 actually represents the planet today as the gap between the haves and have-nots seemingly continues to widen. **R.**

Additional titles include *The Wolverine* (PG-13), *Fast & Furious 6* (PG-13) and *The Smurfs 2* (PG). **[A]**



Mary Poppins



Despicable Me 2



Elysium

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Photo perfect

Five tips for new photographers

By Scott Kelby

HERE ARE FIVE TIPS I wish somebody had told me when I first started in photography (well, except for the first three, because that technology hadn't been invented yet).

1 Shoot wide for more impact (below)

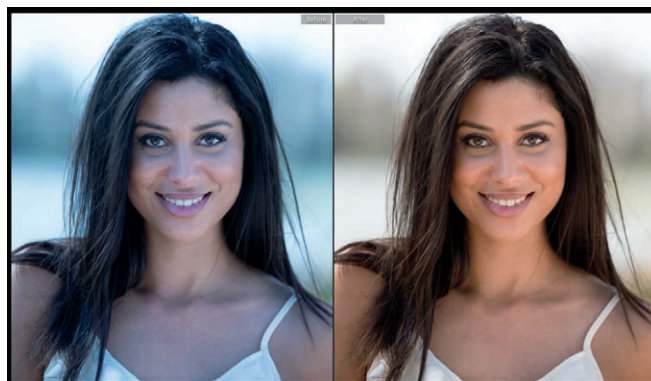
Most likely, the images you take today with your digital camera or cellphone are headed to the Web (Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, etc.). And when you post your images online, you want them to have the most impact possible, right? The secret is to shoot wide.

That's right: Keep your camera horizontal—don't turn it vertically and shoot tall, because those tall shots will seem puny on a Web page (they'll look more like large thumbnails) due to the way most Web pages are designed. Your tall image gets only around 40 percent of the space a wide image would have, which means your tall image has only 40 percent of the impact.



Top: A photo with a vertical orientation lacks impact on social media sites.

Bottom: A wide photo really stands out in these situations.



Left: The lighting is more flattering in the shade, but with auto white balance the scene starts to look very bluish.

Right: Simply change the white-balance setting to "shade" on your camera, and now you get perfect color.

2 For great color, look up (above)

If you're tired of having some images look way too blue, yellow or green, you're one head movement and one button away from having perfect color every time. The color of photos is controlled by the camera's white-balance control, and most people use the camera's auto white-balance feature. The auto feature usually does a great job of giving great color (especially when shooting outdoors), but as soon as you walk into the shade, everybody in the photo gets a blue tint. Or you enter a restaurant, and now everybody looks really yellow.

The fix is easy. Just change the white-balance setting on your camera to match the lighting you're shooting, using this simple two-step process: (1) Look up. If you see trees above your head, you're in the shade. (2) Change your camera's white balance to "shade" and now you have perfect color. If you look up and see clouds, change the white balance to "cloudy." If you're in an office, and you look up and see fluorescent lights, change the white balance to "fluorescent."

It's that easy. Don't forget to switch back to auto white balance, because it really does do a great job of usually providing accurate color.

3 Hold the camera really still (far right)

I get more questions about blurry photos than anything else. The main culprit is that the camera is not being held really still. If you're outside shooting in bright sunlight, you really don't have to worry about this—there's so much light that your camera will literally freeze just about anything, even if it's moving.

But as soon as you walk into the shade, or into a restaurant, there's not as much light. Now your camera needs to keep its shutter open longer, and any movement during that time means blurry photos.

Here are three tricks to keep the camera still in lower lighting.

- Tuck your arms and elbows in close to your body. This helps stabilize the camera.

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ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF SCOTT KELBY

● Stabilize your lens by putting your left hand under the lens to support and steady it.

● In really low light, lean against something (a wall, or a column, or anything you can lean your body on). Keeping your body still helps keep the camera still.

If you try all three and you're still getting blurry photos, raise your camera's ISO setting, which increases your camera's shutter speed, until your photos look nice and sharp.

4 Another trick for low light

Here's a trick I use quite a bit if I'm shooting in a low-light situation, and it works like a charm: Set your camera to shoot in "burst mode" (where you're holding down the shutter button and your camera fires a continuous series of shots until you release the shutter button). Let's say you hold it down in a low-light situation and it takes six or seven continuous shots. Chances are most of them will be a bit blurry, or even really blurry. But chances are also that at least one of those shots will be tack sharp, and all you need is one nice sharp shot, right? Right!

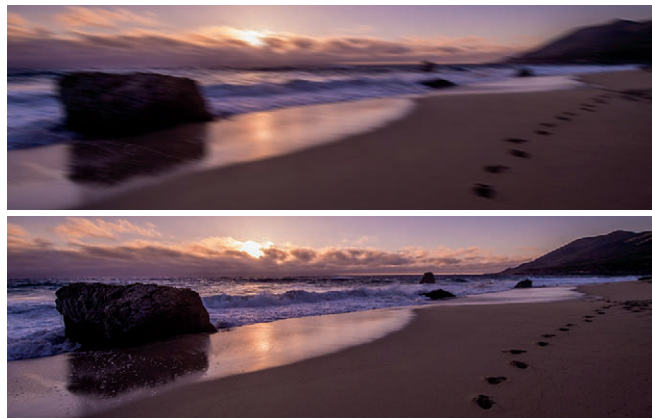
5 Zoom in

This last tip will help you make people in your portraits look their very best, and it's based on the fact that wider angle lenses tend to not be really flattering to subjects because they distort their facial features a bit. The wider the lens, the more it distorts.

The Costco Connection

Costco features a selection of cameras and accessories in the warehouses and online at Costco.com. Costco's Photo Centers offer a full range of photographic services to make the most of your photos.

You might not even realize this is happening until you try shooting someone with a long lens (150 mm or 200 mm). The lens compression and perspective of a long lens is very flattering to subjects (and, after all, you want the people you photograph to look their very best), so the next time you're taking a portrait, use a zoom lens. Stand back a good distance from your subject and then zoom in tight, and you'll get a more flattering look with no distortion. [E]



Top: A common problem for beginners is a blurry photo.

Bottom: Steady the camera, especially in low light, for a sharp shot.

Scott Kelby is the author of *The Digital Photography Book, Part 1* (Peachpit Press, 2013 ; not available at Costco) and is co-host of *The Grid*, a weekly talk show for photographers. He also writes a daily blog with photography tips and techniques at scottkelby.com.

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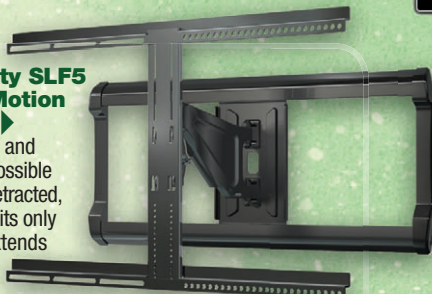
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VIZIO E60ti-A3 60" Class 1080p Smart LED LCD HDTV ▲

60.04" diagonal. VIZIO 60" Razor LED provides stunning picture quality and a better Smart TV experience with built-in Wi-Fi. QWERTY keyboard remote control included. All TVs include Costco second-year warranty. Item #960060

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SANUS Simplicity SXDP6 Universal Large TV Wall Mount ▲

This ultra-thin tilting wall mount is excellent for viewing your TV from the couch, bed or even the floor. Fits most TVs 37" to 80" and up to 125 lbs. Sits only 1" from the wall when retracted and tilts up to 10 degrees. Item #933410

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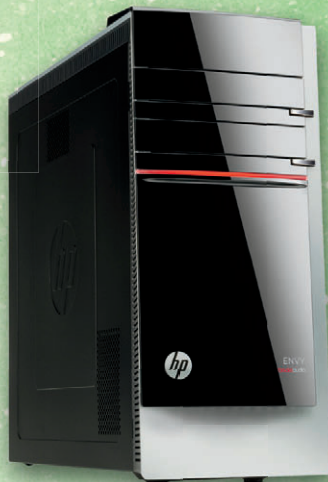
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Ultra-thin and ultra-light, the Triad case offers sturdy viewing and typing angles and all-around protection. The hard-shell back cover is custom-fit to the Tab 3, keeping it secure and protected on all sides. The front cover has a soft interior lining that protects your device's screen. Includes stylus. Item #811070

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This compact camera offers amazing zoom, image quality, versatility and technological innovation. Shoot close up or from afar, even in low light, with a 42x wide-angle optical zoom. Features 18.1 MP CMOS sensor, up to 7-frames-per-second shooting, 1080p HD video and GPS geo-tagging. Includes case and 16 GB SD card. Item #746504

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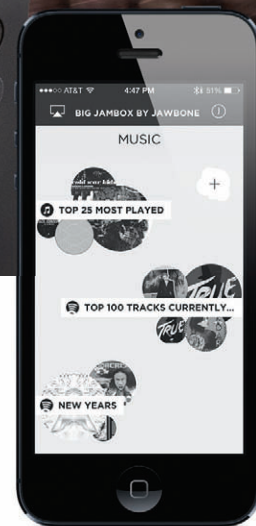
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Energy Star = lower energy bills

THE GREAT THING about technological progress is the introduction of exciting new products that add quality and functionality to everyday lives. The bad thing about technology is that more gadgets may mean more electricity usage, and more electricity usage

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Look for the Energy Star logo on major appliances at Costco warehouses and on Costco.com.

generally translates to higher electric bills. But if you want to save energy, it's as easy as looking for a star.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Energy Star Program is a voluntary program, open to manufacturers, retailers, contractors, builders, etc., that aims to help businesses and individuals save money and protect the climate through superior energy efficiency. According to the EPA, the average home has 24 consumer electronics products, and it estimates that a home equipped with

TVs and a home theater system that have earned the Energy Star can save more than \$200 over the lifetime of those products.

All Energy Star-certified products go through rigorous performance testing whose results are certified by independent, EPA-recognized testing laboratories and facilities. Energy Star-certified consumer electronics provide the same functionality as standard products but use less energy, reducing their impact on the environment and your wallet.

Costco assistant general manager Bill Prescott says, "Almost all TVs that we sell today have earned the Energy Star. Almost all are LED backlit, which is very energy efficient. Most, if not all, of our Blu-ray players carry the Energy Star certification."

He adds, "Energy Star designation is a very important indicator to members purchasing TVs as they replace older, less energy-efficient models they have been using." The majority of large household appliances—e.g., washers, dryers, dishwashers, refrigerators—are covered by the Energy Star program.

When shopping for consumer electronics, lighting, appliances or other household items, look for the Energy Star label. For more information on Energy Star-certified products, and for other ways to save energy, visit www.energystar.gov. —Steve Fisher

Help! My dog ate my cellphone!

IF YOU INVEST in a new smartphone, television or computer, Costco's SquareTrade protection plans let you buy a little peace of mind, too. The program offers extended protection for smartphones, TVs, computers and other electronics, plus brand-new plans covering tablets and cameras, purchased at Costco.

When Costco member Kathleen Szczepanski purchased her first smartphone at the Costco in Waterbury, Connecticut, something in her triggered a response when the sales associate suggested a SquareTrade protection policy.

"I had a new puppy, and I'm not that good with things. I got the insurance just in case," says Szczepanski. "A week later, that's when the dog decided to use it as a dog bone."

Her puppy, Tobey, a Cavalier King Charles, destroyed the leather case and

cracked the face of the phone. It was unusable.

"I just called SquareTrade," recalls Szczepanski. "I gave [the representative] all of the details. He even asked what kind of dog it was. He gave me all the information on how to get the new phone. And it arrived in the mail in [three days]. It was very smooth."

Costco assistant general manager Steve Messmer says, "Across the board, our SquareTrade protection plans are the lowest-priced plans available."

Buy a new tablet or camera and get two years of additional protection for drops and

The Costco Connection

For more information, go to Costco.com and search "SquareTrade."



Tablet or smartphone?

Scan or click here for a short video on SquareTrade. (See page 5 for scanning details.)

spills for \$29.99, \$49.99 or \$79.99, based on the price of the device. Televisions get an extra three years of protection for \$29.99, \$59.99 or \$99.99. Computers get three years of drops and spills coverage, plus a third year of normal-use failure protection, for \$99.99, or \$69.99 for computers less than \$500.

Smartphone coverage is \$99.99 for two years. For the record, Szczepanski reports, "I felt that \$50 a year for the protection of breakage and spills was worth it, and my gamble paid off."

As for Tobey, she says, "I make sure I keep [the smartphone] out of his reach now." —SF



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The new LG Smart TV gives you quick and easy access to Netflix, Hulu Plus, YouTube and more. With the power of LG's intuitive Magic Remote, simply gesture, point and click, scroll or use LG's unique Voice Mate™ to speak into the remote to control your entertainment. Now you can spend less time navigating and more time enjoying your entertainment.

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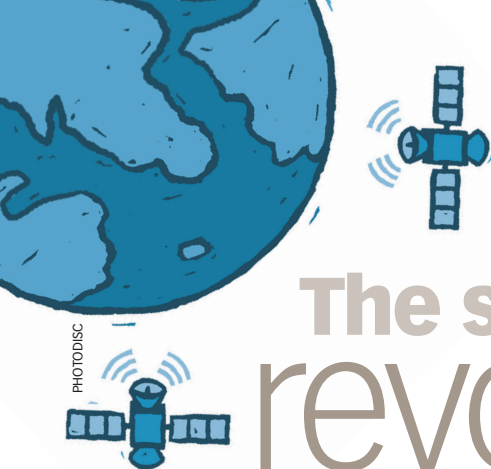
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The smart revolution

How Internet connectivity has revolutionized TV

By Andy Penfold

WHEN JOHN LOGIE Baird invented the first publicly demonstrated TV system, the world rightly thought it was pretty smart. But TVs today take clever to a whole other level. Smart TVs, as the latest crop of television sets is known, do a lot more than simply beam TV channels into your living room.

Fun and function

When the term “smart” is used in a technology context, it means that Internet connectivity has been added to a device, bringing new functionality. So, a smart TV is a model that can get online and provide access to streamed content, apps (free and paid), games and other widgets to you via the screen.

Most smart TVs these days connect to the Internet wirelessly using your home Wi-Fi connection. These TVs indicate that they are Wi-Fi enabled (or built-in). The TV simply connects to your router using easy on-screen commands, in the same way you connect your computer, smartphone or tablet to your home Wi-Fi.

Be aware that if you're already using a range of Internet-connected devices wirelessly at home, a smart TV is yet another one to add to your router's work, which can affect its performance. If this is an issue, you can also connect the TV to the Internet via a wired Ethernet connection.

There's an app for that

There's no standard for smart TVs. Each manufacturer offers a different platform and user interface to deliver Internet services, so it's important to check what services and apps are available on the models you're interested in. App stores, where you can download additional programs, are available on most smart TVs, but, again, what each manufacturer offers varies wildly.

The Costco Connection

At your local Costco, and on Costco.com, you'll find a selection of smart TVs, as well as many other electronic devices for work and home.

Most smart TVs provide a means to watch on-demand TV content, usually through built-in or downloadable apps, so you can watch HD content on your TV rather than having to use a browser on your computer. Depending on which TV brand you go for, you'll find a range of TV channels' on-demand services, such as Fox Now and HBO Go.

Streaming movies is also very easy. If you're a user of Netflix, Hulu Plus or Vudu, check whether your TV has an app that will let you access your account on your service.

You'll even find models with apps such as Skype, Facebook and Twitter, so you can use your TV to stay in touch with people on your social networks. And, just as with your phone, apps are available that can give you snippets of information, from weather reports to sports scores.

Get smart with smart TV

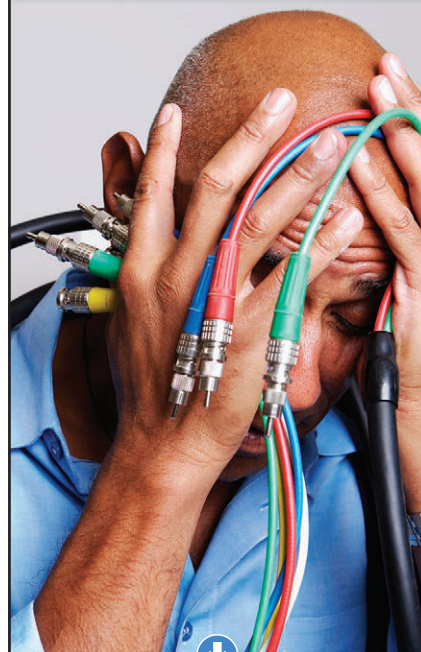
A smart TV will let you access your apps via remote control, and many TVs allow you to customize your app home screen. That way, you can remove apps you never use and keep your favorites just a few button pushes away.

Many viewers have a second screen—a smartphone or tablet—in their hands while they watch TV these days, and some smart TVs have a companion app that can be downloaded to such a device. The smartphone app can have a range of functions, from acting as a second remote to letting you stream video content from your phone to the TV, or vice versa.

With all these additional features, TVs really have become a lot smarter. The Internet is opening up gadgets to a new era of connectivity, and by adding digital entertainment, apps and communications to the TV, you get a vastly superior experience. [E]

Andy Penfold is a freelance technology writer whose work has appeared in Macworld, Q, The Big Issue and many other publications.

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MEDIA BAKERY

Travel with confidence

A little prep can help ease your trip

By Mary Barberio

ARE YOU PLANNING a long weekend at the beach or two weeks of backpacking throughout Borneo? No matter your destination, it's a drag to arrive and realize you've packed the wrong clothes, forgotten your meds and can't remember if you unplugged the iron. Take a tip from Ben Franklin. He realized a long time ago that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." What's the key to prevention here? Plan ahead, organize and make a list. Then check it twice.

Start with the proper luggage.

Look for durable yet lightweight luggage. You don't want to strain your back, nor do you want to resort to duct tape if the zipper breaks. Go for quality, as much as your budget can afford. According to ConsumerSearch.com, "Most complaints about durability involve handles and zippers breaking, bending or sticking." If you are choosing a wheeled bag, they suggest looking for "encased wheels set widely apart." Most frequent travelers

agree that the best handles stay firm and steady when pulled out and retracted, and zippers should slide easily around corners.

If you're traveling by plane, remember to check with your airline in regard to luggage and carry-on restrictions. To check the Transportation Security Association guidelines, go to www.tsa.gov.

Whether you travel by plane, train, automobile, bus or mule, consider a backpack to carry your necessities. It'll sit nicely on top of your wheeled bag; it can be worn on your back, thereby freeing up your hands; and it can serve as a handy tote for the beach, museum, zoo or just about anywhere.

Fold, roll or bundle?

There has been much discussion on the best way to pack a suitcase; each has pros and cons. What's right for you? It all depends. Among factors to consider are the destination, purpose, length of stay and climate. Are you packing sweatshirts or fancy dresses? Experiment by laying out all the items you intend to take on the bed and try packing them.

What's in your bag?

I can tell you what's in mine. For a recent one-week volleyball tournament (I flew), I packed everything into a carry-on bag and a

Before you leave home

- ✓ Check expiration dates on your driver's license and passport.
- ✓ Check your cellphone and medical/emergency coverage.
- ✓ Have enough prescription meds to last a few extra days.
- ✓ Alert your credit card company.
- ✓ Prepay all bills that aren't paid automatically.
- ✓ Stop your mail and newspaper. Visit www.usps.com for the form to hold mail.
- ✓ Clean out your refrigerator and dispose of all perishables, and ask a neighbor to set out your garbage.
- ✓ Give a house key to a neighbor.
- ✓ Make a plan for pets.
- ✓ Turn off the water.
- ✓ Lock doors and windows, and notify your local police department.
- ✓ Adjust the thermostat.
- ✓ Unplug electrical devices, except a timer.
- ✓ If driving, check road conditions online or call 511 from your phone. Consider a GPS system or, at the very least, a compass. —MB

backpack. With no checked bags, I didn't need to worry about my uniform and deflated volleyball ending up in Timbuktu. The soft-sided bag was forgiving, allowing me to stuff lots inside. I chose only clothes that could mix and match and be worn in layers. I stuck to a basic color (navy) and lightweight fleece jackets.

My backpack fit easily under the seat in front, giving me convenient access to my necessary provisions, including bottled water, snacks and noise-blocking earplugs. It also contained a small first-aid kit (for me, mostly for sport-related injuries). Since it's always a good idea to travel with some kind of kit, check out the American Red Cross website (www.redcross.org) and search for "Anatomy of a First Aid Kit." The Red Cross also offers kits for sale, with some priced as low as \$3.

That's all it takes: a bit of planning, some organizing and your list. Follow it carefully and you can eliminate a lot of stress. You'll feel confident that you've packed the right clothes, brought enough medicine and unplugged the iron.

Enjoy your trip. ☑

Costco member Mary Barberio is a freelance travel writer.

The Costco Connection

Costco members will find luggage, clothing, first-aid kits and other travel-related items at Costco and on Costco.com. Costco Travel offers a wide variety of vacation options (see page 83).



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To book, click Travel at Costco.com or call 1-877-849-2730.



Celebrating Wine

Wine-and-seas cruise pairings

By Ralph Grizzle

WINE AND CRUISING go together like peanut butter and jelly. OK, maybe that's not the best analogy, but cruise ships do present the perfect venues for learning about wines. On ships, you can pair wines with fine cuisine at multiple restaurants. The captain will take care of getting you to where you're going. Talk about a designated driver.

Celebrity Cruises and Costco Travel have joined together to offer a series of special wine cruises in 2014. Each of the five sailings provides the perfect blend of destination, ship and vintners.

Destinations cover the Caribbean, the Bahamas, Northern Europe and the Mediterranean. Sailings also are offered closer to home, including a 15-night cruise from Fort Lauderdale to San Diego through the Panama Canal.

Costco Travel's 2014 Buyer's Choice Wine Cruise Series provides both the opportunity to cruise to these regions of the globe and the chance to enjoy private events hosted by guests from award-winning West Coast wineries. The sailings are limited to 120 Costco members, so if wine cruises are something you think you could raise your glass to, start planning your travel soon.

Celebrity Cruises brands itself as offering "Modern Luxury," and it succeeds in emulating many of the experiences found on smaller, ultra-luxury cruise ships that command considerably higher cruise fares. But while Celebrity is value-oriented, the company does not skimp on luxury touches, such as contemporary design, sophisticated dining experiences and high standards of service. Celebrity's vessels are some of the most beautiful and feature-laden afloat.

Joining the Lawn Club set

Two of Costco Travel's wine cruises will be conducted on Celebrity's new Solstice Class vessels, which feature the first Lawn Club at sea. It's an outdoor, country-club-like venue featuring a real grass lawn (yes, it has to be mowed), where guests can enjoy putting, playing lawn games such as croquet and lawn bowling and more.

In 2011, Celebrity *Silhouette* introduced the Lawn Club Grill, the industry's first outdoor grill venue where you can cook for yourself,



Tablet or smartphone?

Scan or click here for highlights of the Buyer's Choice wine cruise series. (See page 5 for scanning details.)

with the help of a chef if you desire. Costco Travel offers a seven-night Caribbean and Bahamas Buyer's Choice Robert Ramsay Cellars Cruise that sails round-trip from Fort Lauderdale on Celebrity *Silhouette*. Robert Ramsay Cellars is a small craft winery located in Woodinville, Washington.

On the even-newer Celebrity *Reflection*, introduced in 2012, Costco Travel features an 11-night Mediterranean Buyer's Choice Clos Pegase Wine Cruise, sailing round-trip from Rome and visiting Italy, the Greek Isles and Turkey. The Clos Pegase winery produces artisan, handcrafted wines near Calistoga, California.

To Infinity, and beyond

Celebrity *Infinity* is the platform for two wine cruises: an 11-night Wente Vineyards Northern Europe Wine Cruise that begins and ends in Harwich, England, with calls on Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Scotland and Norway. Situated in Livermore, California, Wente Vineyards holds the distinction of being the oldest continuously operating, family-owned winery in California.

Also on Celebrity *Infinity* is a 15-night Grgich Hills Estate Wine Cruise, sailing from Fort Lauderdale to San Diego through the Panama Canal. Produced in Napa Valley, Grgich Hills Estate wines have been served at state dinners hosted by Presidents Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton, Queen Elizabeth II and French President François Mitterrand.

Cruise of the Century

Finally, Celebrity *Century* is the venue for an eight-night Zaca Mesa West Coast and Mexico Wine Cruise, round-trip from Los Angeles, visiting Santa Barbara, San Francisco (where the ship overnights), Monterey, Santa Catalina and Ensenada, Mexico. Located in Los Olivos, California, the Zaca Mesa winery operates some of the highest-elevation vineyards in Santa Barbara County, where it produces outstanding wines from Rhône varieties and Chardonnay.

A perfect set of pairings: wine and cruising, award-winning vintners and you—all on some of the most beautiful ships at sea, sailing to some of the world's most inspirational destinations. We'll drink to that! ☞

Ralph Grizzle is an award-winning journalist who cruises about 180 days a year.



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THE FRUIT COMPANY®

Orchard Fresh Gifts Since 1942

The Fruit Company Classic 5-Box Holiday Tower

Includes Fuji apples, Bosc and Webster Comice pears, chocolate-covered blueberries, mixed nuts and decadent chocolate truffles. Packaged in five festive boxes.

\$29.99 Delivered After \$10 OFF

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The Fruit Company Celebration 8-Box Holiday Tower

Includes orchard fresh fruit, Fuji apples, Bosc and Comice pears, chocolate-covered pears, chocolate-covered cherries, Zebra chocolate popcorn, tomato basil cheese, blueberry shortbread cookies and more. Packaged in eight festive boxes.

\$49.99 Delivered After \$20 OFF

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The Fruit Company Grand Holiday 12-Box Tower

Includes Fuji and Pink Lady apples, Bosc, Comice and Red D'Anjou pears, McTavish peppermint chocolate shortbread cookies, white chocolate Oreos, smoked pink salmon, cinnamon bun popcorn and more. Packaged in 12 cascading boxes.

**\$99.99 Delivered
After \$50 OFF**

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Santa's Helper Holiday Gift Basket

Includes Ghirardelli and Godiva gourmet chocolates, crème brûlée truffles from Ireland, Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory hot cocoa and more.

\$79.99 Delivered After \$20 OFF
Valid 11/11/13-12/8/13
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Mrs. Fields Holiday Tower

Includes 48 Nibblers bite-size cookies, 12 assorted cookies, four hand-frosted cookies, 12 assorted brownies and more.

\$79.99 Delivered #851239



Mrs. Fields Cookies Deluxe Holiday Bites Basket

Includes 144 assorted Nibblers bite-size cookies and 72 assorted Brownie Bites.

\$59.99 Delivered #561774



Season's Best Gourmet Tower

Includes assorted truffles, dark-chocolate-covered almonds, Walkers shortbread, peanut-butter-filled pretzels and more.

\$39.99 Delivered After \$10 OFF
Valid 11/11/13-12/8/13
#461592



David's Cookies Annie's Mini Desserts

Includes 12 of our most popular mini cakes. Three mini cakes of each flavor: Jack Daniel's, Bananas Foster, Lil' Red Velvet and Orange Creamsicle.

\$39.99 Delivered
Valid 12/2/13-12/29/13
#689920



Dancing Deer Sleigh Ride Dessert Tower

Includes triple chocolate chip cookies, caramel sea salt squares, molasses clove cookies, chocolate chunk brownies, holiday star cookies and more.

\$34.99 Delivered After \$10 OFF
Valid 11/11/13-12/8/13
#489894



Jack Frost Holiday Tower

Includes chocolate pralines, cocoa-dusted truffles, assorted cookies, caramels, yogurt-covered pretzels and more in an impressive purple and silver tower.

\$49.99 Delivered After \$20 OFF
Valid 11/11/13-12/8/13 #461595

Imported Neuhaus Belgian Chocolates Elegant Gift Box

A premium selection of exquisite Neuhaus chocolates in a keepsake box. Twenty chocolate pieces per drawer, 60 pieces total. Made in Brussels, Belgium.

\$64.99 Delivered
#811173



Dilettante Snowflake Holiday Tower

Includes assorted TruffleCremes, chocolate candy cane cookies, chocolate-covered dragées and Black Forest trail mix in a blue and silver tower.

\$39.99 Delivered #804287



Imported Belgian Fresh Cream Chocolates

Made with fair trade, pure, natural Belgian chocolate, fresh cream and only the purest high quality ingredients.

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**10
PACK**

Mini Cone Gift Basket 10-Pack

Each basket includes five mini cones of delicious gourmet flavors:

- 2 Caramel Corn
- 1 Cheddar Cheese
- 1 Kettle Corn
- 1 Zebra

**\$69.99
Delivered**
#804654

Mini Cones 48-Pack

Includes 48 cones, 12 of each, of our most popular flavors:

- Zebra
- Caramel Corn
- Kettle Corn
- Cheddar Cheese

\$39.99 Delivered After \$10 OFF
Valid 11/11/13-12/8/13 #699054



Ultimate Holiday 18-Pack

Includes:

- Zebra
- Gingerbread
- Caramel Corn
- White Cheddar
- Cinnamon Toast
- Pumpkin Spice
- Kettle Corn
- Jalapeño Cheddar
- And more

\$49.99 Delivered After \$20 OFF
Valid 11/11/13-12/8/13 #563209



Best of Popcornopolis 10-Cone Gift Basket

Includes 10 cones of seven gourmet popcorn flavors:

- Zebra
- Almond Toffee
- Caramel Corn
- White Cheddar
- Kettle Corn
- Cinnamon Toast
- Cinnamon Bun

\$39.99 Delivered After \$10 OFF
Valid 11/11/13-12/8/13 #699051



D'Artagnan Ultimate Food Lover's Gift Basket

Includes smoked chicken sausages, truffle butter, pâté, applewood-smoked bacon, dried wild mushrooms, smoked chorizo sausages and more.

**\$99.99 Delivered
After \$20 OFF**
Valid 11/11/13-12/8/13 #562149

Vacaville Fruit Company 63 oz. Dried Fruit and Nut Basket

Includes dried pears, white peaches, fruit and nut medley, apple wedges, apricots, roasted salted pistachios and more.

\$39.99 Delivered #258892



Plaza Osetra Farmed Russian Sturgeon Caviar

Includes three 2 oz. jars, 6 oz. total. Ranges in color from phantom black to dark brown, medium to large in grain size and has a distinct nutty finish.

\$199.99 Delivered
Valid 12/2/13-12/29/13 #603382

Walkers Scottish Holiday Gift Trunk

Includes Walkers Scottish biscuits, Walkers quadruple chocolate chunk biscuits, smoked salmon and more in a reusable black trunk.

\$59.99 Delivered
#690884



Nutristore 1-Year 1-Person Food Storage

Includes 96 total #10 cans of fruits, vegetables, protein, grains, dairy and more. 6,200 total servings. Over 1,200 calories per day for one person for a year.

\$849.99 Delivered
Valid 12/2/13-12/29/13 #823297



Freeze-Dried Chicken Food Storage

120 total servings. 6.9 lbs. of freeze-dried premium white chicken chunks. Good for everyday use or long-term food storage. Up to a 25-year shelf life.

\$159.99 Delivered Valid 12/2/13-12/29/13 #795241



Freeze-Dried Cheese Food Storage

Includes 240 total servings. Over 12 lbs. of freeze-dried cheese, three #10 cans of cheddar cheese and three #10 cans of mozzarella. Up to a 25-year shelf life.

\$169.99 Delivered Valid 12/2/13-12/29/13 #688743



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Key Ingredient Digital Recipe Reader

Wi-Fi sync, 7" touchscreen, 480 x 800 resolution and kitchen-safe construction.

\$99.99 Delivered
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Peet's Coffee
120 Single Cups
 Available in various blends, roasts and decaf.
\$69.99 Delivered
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Jura Impressa S9
One-Touch Classic
Automatic Coffee Center
 Variable temperature setting and height-adjustable coffee spout.
\$1,499.99 Delivered
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 #806264 Costco.com only.



Saeco Energetica Automatic
Espresso Machine with
Integrated Milk Frother
 Delivers perfect espresso and milk experience with one-touch operation. Made in Italy.
\$1,499.99 Delivered
 #801807 Costco.com only.



Keurig® Platinum
Single-Cup Coffee
Brewing System
 Brews five cup sizes.
 Includes 60 K-Cup® packs.
 72 oz. water reservoir.
\$159.99 Delivered
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THE ONLY MARK OF GENUINE KEURIG QUALITY



Jura ENA 9 One-Touch
Espresso Machine
 Aroma-boost function, intelligent pre-brew aroma system, one-touch cappuccino and height-adjustable coffee spout.
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Susquehanna Glass
Monogrammed Flatware
and Glassware
 Various sizes and styles available.
Starting at \$34.99 Delivered
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CuiZen Stainless Steel
10-Tray Food Dehydrator
 1,000-watt heating element, digital timer up to 15 hours, 10 removable trays and 2,300 sq. in. of drying capacity.
\$199.99 Delivered
 #822152 Costco.com only.



CuiZen Vertical Rotisserie
 1,050 watts. Easy-to-push buttons with digital display. Stainless steel interior for easy cleanup.
\$89.99 Delivered
 #822142 Costco.com only.



CuiZen Retro-Style Hot Dog Steamer
 Steams up to 24 hot dogs and 12 buns at one time. Cooks in 12 minutes.
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Master Grade Premium Multi-Stage Electric Knife Sharpener

Maintain a 15-degree blade edge.
Includes Usuba knife.

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Master Grade HD Electric Commercial Knife Sharpener

Works on serrated knives.
Includes 7" Santoku knife and 7" Usuba knife.

\$249.99 Delivered After \$50 OFF

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"Cutting with precision requires a sharp knife.
That's why I require Master Grade to keep
all my knives sharp and precise."

Master Chef Martin Yan



H2O Reserve Water Storage System with Filter Pump

Includes 20 5-gallon mylar bladders in boxes with pump and two standard filters. Each filter cleans up to 100 gallons of water.

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Over eight hours of run time with space-saving design. Emits a soft glow when turned on.

\$59.99 Delivered

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BellaLite Hair Removal System by Silk'n

Includes pre-installed lamp cartridge and replacement cartridge, each containing 1,500 pulses.

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BellaFace Anti-Aging Skin Device by Silk'n

Includes Dead Sea mineral cream and Silk'n Serum for maximum benefit.

\$179.99 Delivered

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Remington i-Light Pro Premier Intense Pulsed Light Hair Removal System

FDA cleared and clinically proven, proprietary ProPulse technology delivers results that last up to six months.

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American Comfort Titanium Heater

1,500 watts. Heats rooms up to 1,000 sq. ft. Built-in air purifier with UV-C and Tio technology.

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#692751

Costco.com only.



American Comfort Tower Heater

1,500 watts. Remote control included. Heats rooms up to 1,000 sq. ft. Dark oak finish.

\$299.99 Delivered

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Germ Guardian 3-in-1 Air Cleaning System 2-Pack

UV-C, True HEPA and odor reduction. Captures 99.97% of airborne allergens. UV-C power kills bacteria and viruses.

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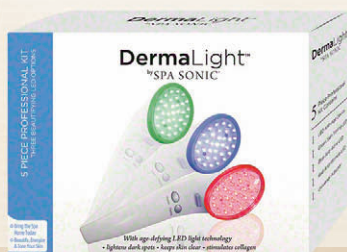
DermaLight LED Anti-Age Device by Spa Sonic

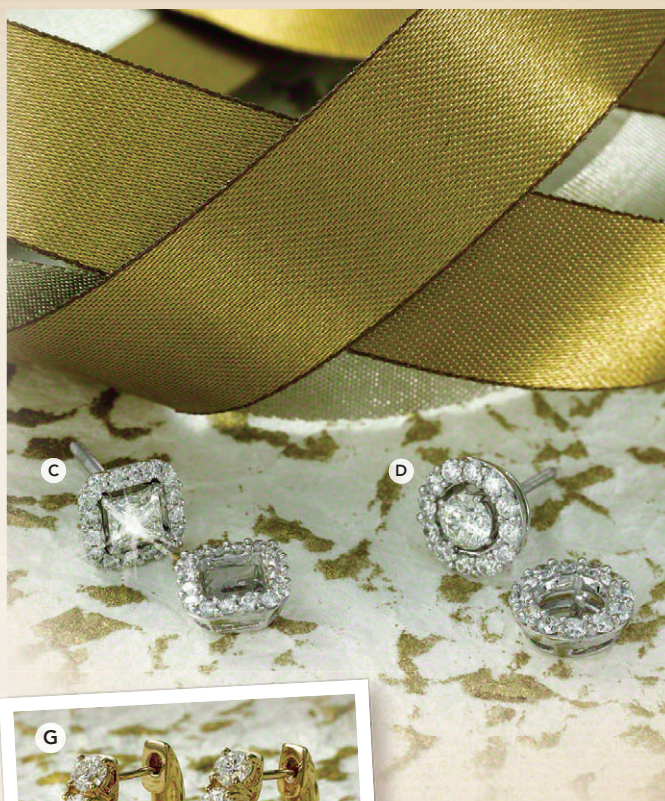
Includes three removable face attachments used for acne, fine lines and dark spots. Safe and effective on all skin types.

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A. Round Brilliant Diamond Necklace (1.00 ctw)
18kt yellow gold.
\$2,999.99
Delivered
#809360

B. Round Brilliant Diamond Necklace (1.00 ctw)
18kt white gold.
\$2,999.99
Delivered
#552459

C. Square Earring Jackets (Fits .50 ctw to .60 ctw Princess Cut Studs)
14kt white gold.
\$429.99
Delivered
#460183
Diamond studs sold separately.

D. Round Brilliant Earring Jackets (Fits .50 ctw to .60 ctw Round Studs)
14kt white gold.
\$649.99
Delivered
#460192
Diamond studs sold separately.

E. Round Brilliant Diamond Hoop Earrings (4.00 ctw)
14kt white gold.
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F. Oval Polished Tube Hoop Earrings
14kt white gold.
\$169.99
Delivered
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G. Round Brilliant Diamond Hoop Earrings (1.45 ctw)
14kt yellow gold.
\$1,999.99
Delivered
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H. Round Brilliant Diamond Cross Necklace (.33 ctw)
14kt white gold.
\$599.99
Delivered
#808662

I. Round Brilliant Diamond Ring (.50 ctw)
14kt white gold.
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J. Round Brilliant Diamond Cluster Earrings (1.45 ctw)
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\$2,299.99
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K. 7.0-9.0 mm Freshwater Pearl Necklace
14kt white gold.
\$449.99 Delivered
#810960

L. 5.0-8.5 mm Freshwater Pearl Necklace
14kt yellow gold.
\$399.99 Delivered
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M. Round Brilliant Diamond "Audrey" Wedding Set (1.45 ctw)
Platinum.
\$7,399.99 Delivered
#821345

N. Princess Cut "Audrey" Wedding Set (1.45 ctw)
Platinum.
\$5,899.99 Delivered
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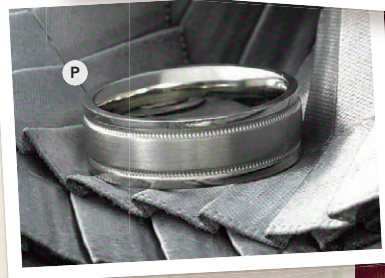
O. 11 mm Cultured Pearl and 1.00 ctw Diamond Earrings
14kt white gold.
\$3,399.99 Delivered
#800199

P. Comfort Fit Wedding Ring
Platinum.
Starting at \$1,199.99 Delivered
#11235802

Q. 9-11 mm Black Tahitian Cultured Pearl Strand
14kt white gold.
\$2,999.99 Delivered
#101551

R. Round Brilliant Diamond Eternity 7" Bracelet (10.00 ctw)
14kt white gold.
\$12,999.99 Delivered
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All diamonds are minimum VS2 clarity, I color.
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Landon 3-Piece Top Grain Leather Reclining Set

Includes reclining sofa, reclining loveseat and recliner.

\$2,999.99 Delivered

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Also available:
Landon 2-Piece Reclining Set
Includes reclining sofa and reclining loveseat.
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Ranger 4-Piece Top Grain Leather Set

Includes sofa, loveseat, chair and ottoman.

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Corrigan Top Grain Leather Sectional

\$2,799.99 Delivered

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Also available:
Corrigan Top Grain Leather Sectional and Storage Ottoman
\$3,199.99 Delivered Valid 12/1/13-1/2/14 #819850



Lakeshire 4-Piece Top Grain Leather Set

Includes sofa, loveseat, chair and ottoman.

\$2,799.99 Delivered

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Cordova 3-Piece Top Grain Leather Set

Includes sofa, loveseat and chair.

\$2,799.99 Delivered

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Also available:
Cordova 4-Piece Leather Set
Includes sofa, loveseat, chair and ottoman.
\$2,999.99 Delivered #813172



Capri 3-Piece Top Grain Leather Set

Includes sofa, loveseat and chair.

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**Kensington 3-Piece
Top Grain Leather Set**
Includes sofa, loveseat and chair.
\$2,199.99 Delivered
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Abbyson
LIVING



**Monte Carlo
4-Piece Fabric Set**
Includes sofa, loveseat,
chair and ottoman.
\$2,199.99 Delivered
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#820295 Costco.com only.

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Also available:
Monte Carlo Fabric Sectional and Ottoman
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**Baltimore
Bonded Leather
Storage Ottoman**
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#512374 Costco.com only.



Bentley 72" Media Console
\$799.99 Delivered
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#773062 Warehouse and Costco.com.
Electronics not included.

Abbyson
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**Carlsbad
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\$249.99 Delivered
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**Console Vault
Diversion Wall Safe**
Includes all necessary
installation hardware.
\$229.99 Delivered
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#594651 Costco.com only.



**Cedarbrook
68" Media Console**
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#535538 Costco.com only.
Electronics not included.



**Reid Top Grain
Leather Reclining
Chair and Ottoman**
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Pro-Line II Deluxe Adjustable Air Grid-Back Ergonomic Office Chair
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 Durability and warmth without bulk.
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 100% cotton. Available in red, blue or heather gray.
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Selina 5-Piece Queen Bedroom Set

Includes bed, two nightstands, dresser and mirror.

\$1,749.99 Delivered

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Other sizes/configurations available. Price varies by size/configuration.



Sleep Science 9" Natural Latex Split-King Mattress with Adjustable Base

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#758460 Costco.com only.

Other sizes/configurations available.

Price varies by size/configuration.



Novaform Rhythm 13" Queen Gel Memory Foam Mattress

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Valid 12/1/13-1/2/14

#764341 Costco.com only.

Other sizes available. Price varies by size.



Novaform 3" Pure Comfort Memory Foam Mattress Topper

Various sizes available.

Starting at \$84.99 Delivered

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Yukon Charlie's Pro II Aluminum Snowshoe Kit

Fast-fit, one-pull adjustable binding. New, lightweight and durable cross-weave decking and clip system for added traction. Heel-lift feature to reduce fatigue. Includes trekking poles with flip-lock adjustment system for easy storage and carrying.

\$99.99 Delivered

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Dynamic Monaco 6-Person FAR Infrared Sauna

- Canadian hemlock wood construction
- 15 heating panels
- Interior and exterior LED control panels
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- 15" monitor with DVD player
- FM/CD radio with MP3 auxiliary connection
- Four built-in speakers

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#704686

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Strengthen your arms and core while boosting cardio with this total-body fan cycle.

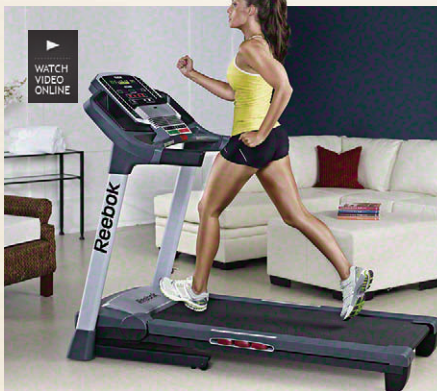
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Reebok Competitor RT 5.1 Treadmill

Assembly included. DMX zone cushioning provides a more comfortable workout.

\$699.99 Delivered

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Reebok

HealthRider H Series Elliptical

Assembly included. 18" to 20" adjustable stride length with 20 built-in workouts.

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Includes free 12-month license for eMobilePOS app, credit card swiper, receipt printer and 50 paper rolls.

Starting at \$999.99 Delivered

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Five PCs, 1-year protection.

Kaspersky Internet Security 2014

Three PCs, 1-year protection.

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HAAN All Pro Handheld Steamer

Powerful pressurized steam, lightweight, garment/upholstery attachment. Accessory kit included

\$57.99 Delivered

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HAAN VersaSteam BS-10

Three variable steam settings with 20-second heat-up time.

\$119.99 Delivered

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HAAN Power & Finesse SI75

Includes six-piece attachment kit. Uses Smart Steam technology.

\$129.99 Delivered

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Bissell DeepClean Professional Pet Deep Cleaner

Includes Stain Trapper tool, 6" stair tool, pet basket and 24 oz. professional deep-cleaning formula.

\$199.99

Plus Shipping and Handling

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Black Wall-Mounted Electric Fireplace

3D patented flame. Built-in 1,400-watt heater with internal safety shutoff sensor.

\$149.99 Delivered

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Life+Gear 80-Lumen LED Flashlight/Flasher 3-Pack

\$49.99 Delivered

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#665362 Costco.com only.



TechLite Lumen Master 2-Piece Tactical 150-Lumen Flashlight 2-Pack

Fully extend light with two AA batteries or convert to a pocket-size light using one AA battery. Batteries not included.

\$29.99 Delivered

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Dean Occasional Table 2-Pack

\$149.99 Delivered

Valid 12/1/13-1/2/14

#595506

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Holiday blooms

ONE OF THE traditional signs of the holiday season is the poinsettia plant. Unlike torn bits of wrapping paper that are put into the recycling bin and decorations that are boxed up for the next year, poinsettias, when taken care of, will last well beyond the holiday season.

Costco's poinsettia suppliers have the following suggestions for getting the most enjoyment out of your poinsettia.

- Place poinsettias in a room where there is bright natural light, but not where there is direct sunlight on the plant.
- Do not let the plant touch a cold windowsill. The contact may result in black spots.
- What many people think of as vibrant red, pink, yellow or cream-colored flowers are actually bracts, or modified leaves. The bright color of the bracts will remain longer if room temperature does not exceed 71 F. A consistently comfortable temperature is very important for poinsettias. It's also worth noting that wilted plants tend to lose their bracts sooner.
- Keep the soil moist. Avoid overwatering or leaving the plant to sit in standing water. Remove the protective wrap and allow the water to completely drain. This will help prevent the green leaves from dropping or curling.

- Keep the plant away from cold drafts or from heated air vents or registers. This is a major cause of leaves dropping off.
- Poinsettias are sensitive to the cold and will not survive outside.
- Fertilize your plant after the blooming season with a balanced all-purpose fertilizer. Do not fertilize a poinsettia when it's in bloom.

When you're gathering with friends and family this season, your poinsettia will impress them with its beauty, while you can impress them with the following poinsettia facts (compiled by the University of Illinois Extension Poinsettia Pages, <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/poinsettia>).

- The belief that poinsettias are poisonous is a misconception. A study at Ohio State University showed that a 50-pound child who ate 500 bracts might have a slight tummy ache. However, poinsettias are not intended for human or animal consumption.
- A fresh poinsettia is one on which little or no yellow pollen is showing on the flower clusters in the center of the bracts. Plants that have shed their pollen will soon drop their colorful bracts.
- To get a poinsettia to reflower, keep it in darkness between 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. until color shows on the bracts.—Stephanie E. Ponder



The Costco Connection

While supplies last, most Costco warehouses will carry poinsettias during November and December.

INDIO PHOTOGRAPHY

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Based on global Nielsen unit share data for the 52 weeks ending 1/1/12.

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Acetaminophen helps alleviate the
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leading national brands.*



****(<http://www.arthritis.org/acetaminophen-comment.php>)***

Exclusively from Costco Wholesale

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PREVENT/BEFORE



To prevent heartburn, take one pill before eating foods that cause heartburn.*

You've Got Choices for **HOW & WHEN** to Tackle Heartburn

*Refer to Drug Facts on the package for directions, warnings and other important information.

Exclusively from Costco Wholesale

WAREHOUSE ONLY | AVAILABLE NOW
Item #295735 (Acid Controller), #260486 (Acid Reducer)

Great new photo cards
and gifts from the
Costco Photo Center

Season's greetings



New 5" x 7"
high-quality cards

6" x 7½" photo
greeting cards



By Steve Fisher

BELLS ARE RINGING, choirs are singing, the mail person is bringing good cheer. Yes, it's that time of the year: time for holidays galore and the chance to let people in your life know you're thinking about them.

For many, it starts with a card. And there's nothing more personal than cards and gifts featuring memories captured in your digital photos. Costco's 1-Hour Photo Center and the Photo Center on Costco.com have lots of options for simple-to-design, high-quality, customizable cards and gifts. Here's a look at some of the options.

Greetings by Costco

Joining the family this year is a new 5-by-7-inch high-quality card made from strong, 120-pound premium smooth white card stock with full-color digital premium printing. (Note that *premium* is a recurring theme here.) Pictures and text may be printed on both sides. Recipients will know, as soon as they remove the card from their mailbox, that they have received a high-quality product. Senders will know they received an incredible value: \$34.50 buys a set of 50 greeting cards, band-wrapped in two packs of 25 in a sturdy keepsake box. Additional sets of 25 cards cost \$17.25.

Any way you look at it, that's a mere 69 cents a card. Other retailers charge up to \$2.56 a card for a comparable product, according to Glen Hutchinson, operations manager for Costco's Photo Centers. And where those others might charge extra for rounded corners, or printing a return address on the envelopes, Costco includes those options, free.

Ordering is easy. Go to Costco.com and click on "Photo," then "Invitations & Greeting Cards," and

get started today. You will have the option to pick up your order at the warehouse, or have it mailed to your home or business.

Photo greeting cards

Long the centerpiece of Costco's Photo Center holiday offerings, the 6-by-7½-inch photo greeting cards have been a member favorite. Besides the size, the difference here, compared with the card above, is in the paper used to print the cards. Rather than card stock, these are produced on high-quality photo paper, and only one side can be printed. (Of course, you can write a personalized message on the other side.)


Orders are ready the next day. An easy-to-use tool to upload photos, select a design and customize as you see fit is available on the Costco.com Photo Center, and at warehouse Photo Centers, and makes the process fun for the whole family.

Payment is due when the order is picked up. The cost is just \$14.99 per set of 50, and \$5.49 each for extra sets of 25. Each set includes white envelopes, and four calendar cards are included with the first set of 50 greeting cards.

Photo books

Although it seems that every device manufactured today touts the ability to store and view photos, for many the chance to thumb through a photo album and view pictures of family and friends brings a greater warmth and sense of nostalgia. A photo book might be just the gift they'd love to receive this holiday season. And it's a gift that keeps on giving long after the holidays have passed. High-quality photo books start at \$19.99.

Photo gifts

From calendars to photo mugs to throws to canvas prints, personal photos can adorn a plethora of products to stay in constant view throughout the year. Notepads, notebooks, stickers, postcards and more can get that personalized photo touch with Costco stationery products. 

The Costco Connection

For more information on great Costco Photo Center products, or to start building a card or gift, go to your local Costco warehouse Photo Center or to Costco.com and click on "Photo."

Calendar
cards



RELIEVE / AFTER



Provides
immediate
short-term
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indigestion*

You've Got Choices for **HOW & WHEN** to Tackle Heartburn

*Refer to Drug Facts on the package for directions, warnings and other important information.

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Kirkland Signature supplements provide the assurance of pure quality for your family. Vitamin D₃, Vitamin C, Daily Multi Pack, Fish Oil and Calcium Chews contain ingredients sourced from high-quality suppliers qualified to meet our stringent quality standards. You can trust Kirkland Signature to safely provide nutrients your family needs.

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Item numbers vary.



†These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

TREAT/DAILY*



**Treats frequent heartburn,
occurring 2 or more days a week.***

You've Got Choices for **HOW & WHEN** to Tackle Heartburn

*Refer to Drug Facts on the package for directions, warnings and other important information.

Exclusively from Costco Wholesale
WAREHOUSE ONLY | AVAILABLE NOW
Item #650402 (Lansoprazole), #258141 (Omeprazole)



Decadently delicious and juicy, this USDA Choice extreme-trimmed tenderloin filet, in roast form, is a gorgeous centerpiece.

IRIDIC PHOTOGRAPHY



BuyingSmart

Sherrie Newman fills December's consumer reporter slot with this behind-the-scenes look at a Costco program. Send your questions about this article to:

buyingsmart@costco.com.

Here's the beef

Costco's meat program is top grade

By Sherrie Newman

AS THE HOLIDAYS approach, home chefs begin searching for ways to delight friends and family with a dining extravaganza. Traditional meals serve as convivial occasions for bonding around the table, and one of the most popular staples in many households is roast beef. There is no better choice than Costco's Kirkland Signature™ Extreme-Trimmed Tenderloin Filet, a USDA Choice filet mignon roast that provides an ultimate melt-in-your-mouth experience and is sure to impress.

Joe Rubino, Costco meat buyer, tells me that Costco's meat-buying team introduced this delectable roast five years ago. "It's the leanest cut of beef that Costco carries, and has become one of our most popular cuts of meat sold year-round, with some members making special trips to the warehouse just for this delicacy," he says. Completely trimmed and denuded (little to no fat, gristle or sinew, hence the name), it has a luscious, tender texture that's ideal for roasting with a tasty dry rub or simply grilling with a bit of sea salt and freshly ground pepper.

High grades

Costco has a robust meat department, and Doug Holbrook, assistant vice president and general merchandise manager of fresh meat and deli, tells me, "Costco is one of the largest buyers of USDA [U.S. Department of Agriculture] Prime and Choice graded beef in the U.S., and we have extremely high standards for the meat we purchase for our members." The USDA assigns eight grades to beef in order to provide a uniform indication of quality for consumers. Grades are primarily based on the amount of marbling in the meat: Higher degrees of marbling provide more tender, juicier meat. The top two grades, Prime (containing the most marbling) and Choice (containing a bit less) are the primary ones that Costco carries.

Joe provides suppliers with exacting specifications for the USDA Prime and Choice beef he buys for the Kirkland Signature brand. "It must be sourced in North America, is grain fed and must also be well trimmed before shipping to Costco so it consistently

yields a maximum amount of meat, which provides greater value to members,” he explains.

All Costco meat departments are managed by skilled meat cutters. Joe, himself a certified meat cutter, notes that when meat arrives at Costco warehouses via refrigerated trucks “the cutters inspect for quality and wholesomeness, then hand-cut and trim again according to our internal cutting specifications. Non-desirable parts such as extra fat or gristle are eliminated, and all that’s left is a beautiful piece of meat with very little waste. Very few retailers can even come close to matching the scale of our USDA Prime and Choice beef program.”

Primary choices

The extreme-trimmed tenderloin filet (pictured at left) is indicative of the excellent quality of beef offered at Costco, and due to Costco’s volume buying power there’s not a better value anywhere for such outstanding quality.

Prime rib is another popular holiday meal choice, and “prime rib lovers will appreciate the four great Kirkland Signature options we offer,” Joe tells me.

- **Standing bone-in rib roast** is a Costco seasonal specialty and the ultimate in tenderness and succulent flavor, making it the favorite of many meat connoisseurs and chefs.

- **Boneless rib roast** is sold year-round and is one of Costco’s most popular and delicious roasts; because it’s boneless, it’s easy to carve and serve to happy diners.

- **Deli seasoned bone-in rib roast** is one of the most appealing seasonal meat selections from the Costco Deli, available at an unbelievable value. Starting with a standing bone-in rib roast from the meat department, the cutters release the bones and then tie them back on for cooking. The deli then stuffs the roast with fresh garlic and enrobes it in Kirkland Signature olive oil and the deli’s own delicious blend of herbs and spices before placing it in an aluminum baking pan.

Simply pop the roast in the oven, grab some of the deli’s own roasted Yukon Gold mashed potatoes or deli mashed sweet potatoes, and throw in a deli Caesar salad and Costco pumpkin pie for a delightful spread that is easy for busy cooks during one of the most hectic times of year.

Kirkland Signature gourmet steaks are sold year-round and offered in both USDA Prime and

Choice grades.

- **New York steak** is a classic cut with plenty of marbling for a bold, flavorful meal.

- **Ribeye steak** is a premium steak cut from a boneless rib that explodes with flavor when simply grilled.

- **Top sirloin steak** is a tasty and affordable cut that is easy to prepare in the oven or on the grill; it’s a leading favorite with Costco members looking for a terrific quality steak.

More details on all these fine cuts can be found on the next page.

Safety first

Costco requires that all beef processing plants be audited by third-party auditors. Christine Summers, director of food safety and corporate quality assurance, notes, “We also conduct shadow audits of the auditors to ensure they are performing according to Costco’s stringent safety specifications.”

One audit is for humane handling of cattle to ensure they are healthy, transported correctly and treated appropriately.

Christine says, “Costco requires that all auditors be PACCO [Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization] certified, which is the leading meat industry auditor accreditation organization and promotes the humane treatment of animals.”

The food quality control (safety) audit reviews 10 categories of food safety for compliance, including sanitation, employee training and hygiene. Christine tells me, “As safe handling of beef is vital, we also require that all Costco managers take a nationally recognized food safety training program, and all Costco employees also take a Costco-developed food safety program.”

Safe meat handling

There are certain food safety rules you should follow when handling and preparing any meat.

- Wash hands well with hot water and soap.
- Wash all utensils, containers, surfaces, etc., after preparing meat.
- Make sure to thaw meats in the refrigerator or microwave.
- Immediately cook meat that has been defrosted in a microwave.
- Marinate meat in the refrigerator and discard leftover marinades (never reuse them).
- Do not use the same surface for cutting meat and vegetables.

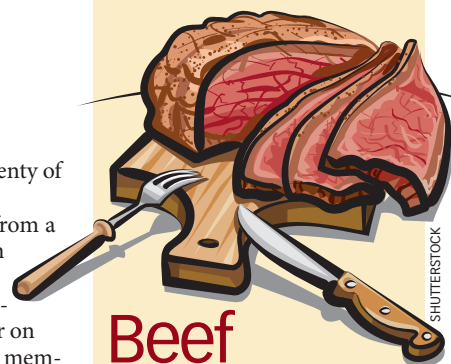
SEE ALSO:

Roast recipes, page 94
Grilling tips, page 95

Fabulous beef

Always hand-trimmed and consistently tender and flavorful, Kirkland Signature beef is an extraordinary value for a hearty, nutritious and delicious meal. Costco’s quality beef is bound to provide chefs with a surefire hit for meat aficionados, at holidays and throughout the year. 🍴

Sherrie Newman (sn.firstpoint@gmail.com) is a marketing and communications consultant who lives in the Seattle area with her family.



Beef to order

MIKE DORPAT, Costco.com food and sundries buyer, manages the Costco.com beef program and is constantly researching unique options to provide to members. In addition to the same USDA Prime selections carried in the warehouse, Costco.com also offers Wagyu steaks and Wagyu ground beef, an American version of Kobe beef, as well as organic grass-fed steaks.

Mike reveals, “An exceptional item we will import over the holiday season is authentic Kobe beef from Japan, a world-renowned cattle breed known for its intense marbling, which provides some of the most tender beef in the world.” Be sure to experience this scrumptious and rare selection, offered at a remarkable value of 11 pounds of Grade 5A (essentially the highest grade) for \$1,499.99, including overnight shipping.

Another exciting new selection is an outstanding 30-day dry-aged prime rib from a supplier that provisions some of the top New York restaurants. The meat is cut to order and sent fresh overnight to members.

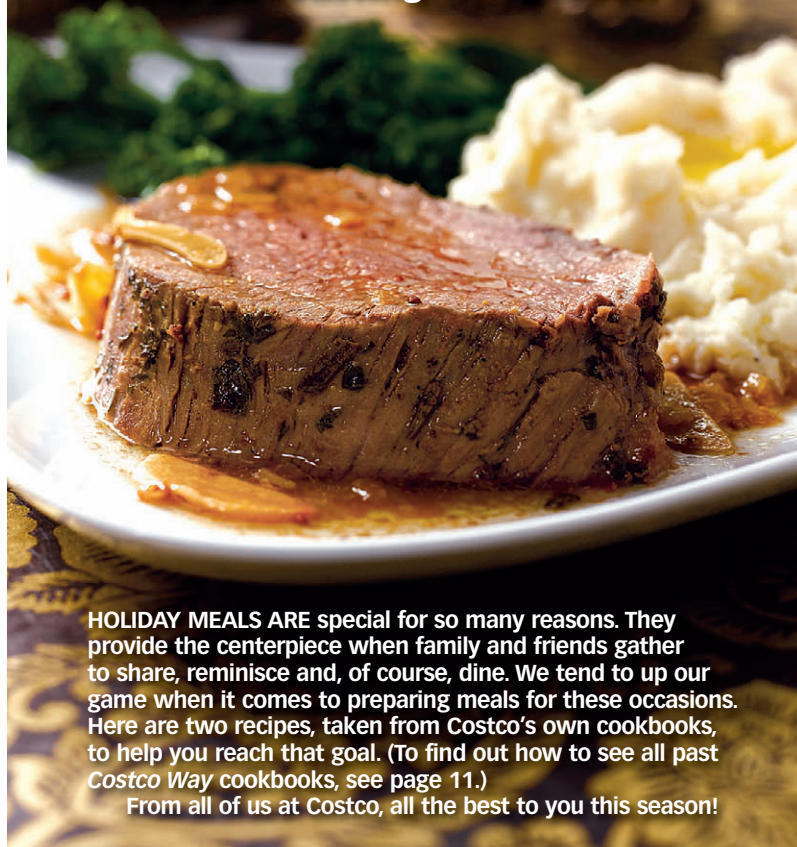
“This dry-aged meat is simply an amazing product, and we are very excited about providing such a quality product to our members,” says Mike.

In addition to the prime rib, Costco.com features a meat lover’s pack that includes dry-aged ribeye, sausages (both hot and sweet) and brisket burgers from the same supplier.

Of course, Costco.com offers a 100 percent guarantee on its beef, with returns possible at any warehouse, and the exceptional value always includes the cost of overnight shipping.—SN

Holiday roasts

Forget chestnuts—this is what you should be roasting this season



HOLIDAY MEALS ARE special for so many reasons. They provide the centerpiece when family and friends gather to share, reminisce and, of course, dine. We tend to up our game when it comes to preparing meals for these occasions. Here are two recipes, taken from Costco's own cookbooks, to help you reach that goal. (To find out how to see all past *Costco Way* cookbooks, see page 11.)

From all of us at Costco, all the best to you this season!

Marsala-Rosemary Roast Tenderloin

1 Kirkland Signature center-cut beef tenderloin roast (about 2 pounds), trimmed

Salt and pepper

2 teaspoons each minced fresh rosemary and parsley, mixed

2 tablespoons olive oil

4 medium shallots, minced (about ¼ cup)

4 garlic cloves, sliced

1½ cups Marsala wine

3 tablespoons butter

1 teaspoon coarse-ground mustard

1 (14-ounce) can beef broth

Preheat oven to 350 F. Season tenderloin with salt and pepper to taste and the herb mixture.

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add beef and brown evenly, about 4 minutes. Place the beef on a rack in a shallow roasting pan.

Add shallots and garlic to the skillet; cook and stir for 1 to 2 minutes. Add Marsala and cook, stirring, for 5 to 6 minutes. Add butter, mustard and beef broth; bring to a boil. Pour into the roasting pan; brush the roast with the broth mixture.

Roast, uncovered, for 15 to 20 minutes per pound, or until the internal temperature is 145 F for medium. Remove the roast and transfer to a carving board; cover. Let stand for 10 minutes, then cut into 4 portions.

Drizzle with Marsala sauce from the roasting pan and serve. Makes 4 servings.

PHOTOS: INDIO PHOTOGRAPHY

Ribeye Roast and Herb Popovers

15- to 17-pound Kirkland Signature™ ribeye roast

½ cup favorite steak seasoning or ⅓ cup equal parts coarse salt and coarsely ground pepper

HERB POPOVERS

3 large eggs

1½ cups flour

1½ cups whole milk

1½ tablespoons butter, melted

¾ teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh chives

½ teaspoon finely chopped fresh thyme

1 teaspoon chopped fresh parsley

Prepare the popover batter: In a blender, combine eggs, flour, milk, melted butter and salt. Blend until smooth. Strain into a small pitcher, cover and refrigerate for 4 to 28 hours.

Preheat oven to 425 F. Trim the roast of fat, leaving at least ¼ inch on the top side. Rub seasoning all over the roast. Place on a rack in a large shallow roasting pan. Roast in the oven for 20 minutes.

Reduce the heat to 350 F and roast for approximately 15 to 20 minutes per pound, or until the internal temperature is 145 F for medium.

Remove from the oven, cover with foil and let sit for 10 to 15 minutes before slicing.

Meanwhile, prepare the popovers: Preheat the oven to 425 F. Spoon ½ teaspoon of roast beef fat from the pan into each of 12 muffin cups. Place the pan in the oven and heat for 2½ minutes.

Add the herbs to the batter. Fill the muffin cups half full of batter. Bake for 15 minutes, then reduce the heat to 350 F and bake for another 15 minutes, or until golden brown. Makes 12 servings.



Grilling the perfect steak



CANADA BEEF INC.

FOLLOW THESE tips to grill the perfect steak at any time of year, courtesy of Jamie Purviance, Costco member, cookbook author and grilling expert.

Give it a rest. Allow your steak to stand at room temperature for 15 to 30 minutes after you remove it from the refrigerator. A properly rested steak will cook faster than a cold one, which means it will be juicier in the end.

Sprinkle on the salt and oil it up. Give the steak a light coating of olive oil to help prevent sticking, and salt it 15 to 30 minutes before it goes on the grill. The salt mingles with the meat juices, which helps to develop a delicious crust when the steak's on the grill. But don't salt too early—it can draw out too much moisture.

Add some smoke. Wood smoke can flavor the meat as well as any seasoning mix or sauce. Consider tossing some wood chips or wood chunks (soaked for 30 minutes and drained first) onto the burning charcoal or a gas grill's smoker box. And keep the lid down to trap the smoke.

Forgo the fork. Use tongs instead to flip steaks. Poking the meat with a fork will cause precious juices to escape.

Get it done, just right. Because steaks get firmer as they grill, one way to check their doneness is to press the surface of a steak with your fingertip. For medium-rare, look for a firmness similar to that of the tip of your nose. A meat thermometer can ensure the steak is properly cooked.

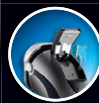
Give it a rest ... again. After removing it from the grill, let your steak rest for three to five minutes. This allows the juices that were pushed to the center by the heat of the grill to migrate back to all parts of the steak so it's juicy throughout. 🍴

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Heartburn is a painful, burning sensation in the lower chest or throat that occurs when stomach acid backs up (or “refluxes”) and irritates the sensitive lining of the esophagus. The esophagus is the tube that carries food from the throat to the stomach. Normally, the lower esophageal sphincter acts like a trapdoor, letting food down into the stomach, while preventing stomach acids from coming back up into the esophagus. When it becomes too relaxed, it can allow stomach acid to flow backward into the esophagus, resulting in heartburn.

Kirkland Signature Lansoprazole delayed-release capsules, 15 mg, belong to a class of drugs called proton pump inhibitors (PPIs). PPIs actually deactivate the pumps in the stomach lining from producing acid, significantly inhibiting acid production (and overproduction) at the source. PPIs are indicated for the treatment of frequent heartburn, which is defined as heartburn that occurs two or more days per week.

An estimated 60 MILLION adults
are affected by HEARTBURN.

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Retirement benefits within reach

START-UP COSTS and administrative fees may make some small-business owners leery of offering retirement benefits. But Costco has partnered with The Online 401(k) to provide small businesses with an affordable way to offer this key option.

Many retirement companies charge asset fees as a percentage of an investment amount. But The Online 401(k) charges only flat-rate administrative and record-keeping fees. This means that it doesn't matter if you have \$1 or \$1 million to invest—the fees stay the same. “That really sets us apart from the industry,” says Sylvia Flores, marketing director for The

Online 401(k). “We’ve always been a flat-fee service company.”

Aside from offering transparent and competitive rates, small-business owners considering this option may benefit from current legislation. Selby Mashakova, partner success manager for The Online 401(k), explains that the Economic Growth and Tax Relief and Reconciliation Act of 2001 allows small businesses to write off a portion of 401(k) start-up costs and the cost of educating employees about the plan, which may help alleviate financial concerns.

Offering retirement plans can also

provide big gains from an employee-retention perspective. According to Flores, offering a 401(k) “will enable you to garner loyalty with your current employees or even to capture some really stellar talent.”

Beyond helping businesses take care of their employees, The Online 401(k) is committed to educating the public about the state of retirement in the U.S. Statistics indicate most Americans are not planning well for retirement, and there are not sufficient long-term resources to sustain government benefits such as Social Security. The Online 401(k) recently helped fund a documentary, *Broken Eggs* (brokeneggfilm.com), which delves into the topic through the eyes of three different generations.

Members can complete the entire sign-up online, but consultants are available by phone to help guide business owners to the best-suited plans, or to answer any questions.

“No business is too small,” says Flores, who encourages even single-person operations to check out its offerings. Flores says the company specializes in plans for businesses with fewer than 100 employees.

For more information, visit Costco.com and search “Retire” or call toll-free 1-855-807-7253.—Hana Medina



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IMAGE 200

THIS TIME OF YEAR, it's easy to focus on family and fun, but it's also a good time to review finances. The new year and tax season are around the corner, so resolve to look over your portfolio and your saving and spending behaviors, and set goals for the coming year.

Dan Greenshields, president of Capital One ShareBuilder, says, "A financial checkup should cover three key areas: assessing what

you have and what you owe, setting goals and designing a plan to get you there."

He recommends the following tips to help jump-start your personal fiscal new year.

- **Give your portfolio a tuneup.** Take a look at the investments you have and make sure you're maintaining a well-balanced, diversified portfolio that aligns with your risk tolerance and goals.

- **Manage capital gains and losses.** If you have underperforming investments, consider selling them, as you can use losses to offset overall gains on your 2013 tax return. Consult your personal tax adviser before taking action.

- **Maximize retirement savings.** If you have a 401(k), max out your contributions (and your employer match, if you have one) to gain full benefits for the tax year. Also, while you're permitted to make IRA contributions through the tax-filing deadline, contributing now may provide additional growth potential.

- **Create an emergency fund.** To minimize the chance of incurring debt from unexpected events, create an emergency fund. Budget wisely to allocate extra funds to an interest-earning, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation-insured savings account. You can also set up automatic contributions to build your savings. A good rule of thumb is to maintain six months' worth of expenses.

Members can get a head start on their potential investment growth with Costco's exclusive pricing program with Capital One ShareBuilder. Online stock trades are \$5.95 per trade, and executive members opening a newly funded account are eligible to receive a \$50 bonus. For more information, visit Costco.com and search "ShareBuilder 2014."



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C. Diamond and Pearl Drop Earrings

These timeless freshwater pearl and diamond earrings have two 0.08 ctw diamonds bezel-set in 14-karat white gold. Item #798893. **Warehouse and Costco.com.**

D. Little Tikes 12V Road Ninja

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E. Wine Enthusiast Q-Series Dual-

Zone Wine Cellar Featuring a full, seamless glass door with black aluminum handle, this stylish wine cellar includes two-zone digital touch-screen temperature control to set storage and service temperatures for both red and white wine, plus blue LED interior lights, built-in key lock and a low-profile, wood-and-metal shelf design for efficient use of space and maximum storage. Item #795720. **Costco.com only.**



A



B



C



D



E

FOCUS ON:

General Motors limited-time offer



THE COSTCO AUTO Program presents significant savings on select new 2013 and 2014 Chevrolet, Cadillac, Buick and GMC models, exclusively for Costco members.

Costco members who register with the Costco Auto Program will receive an authorization number and PIN, qualifying them to receive the following benefits when they purchase an eligible new vehicle from a participating dealer between October 15, 2013, and January 2, 2014:

- GM Supplier and Friends pricing
- All publicly available manufacturer rebates and incentives
- A \$500 Costco Cash card for completing a Costco Auto Program survey after purchase and GM verification

Eligible vehicles—**Chevrolet:** Silverado, Suburban, Tahoe, Traverse and Volt; **Cadillac:** ATS, Escalade, SRX and XTS; **Buick:** Enclave; **GMC:** Acadia, Sierra, Yukon and Yukon XL

To register, visit Costco.com and search "GM5" or call 1-800-895-0971. To qualify for this offer you must be a current Costco member as of October 1, 2013. Restrictions apply.



F. Ricardo Beverly Hills 27" Softside Spinner

The 360-degree spinner wheels and deluxe expandable interior make this suitcase perfect for traveling down the road or around the world. Available in red or black. Item #777186. **Warehouse and Costco.com.**

G. Google Play \$60 Gift Card Multipack

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H. Grand Patrician 6-Piece Printed Sheet Set

These classic sateen sheet sets are 300-thread-count fabric and are made of 100% cotton. Sets are available in multiple prints and patterns. Sizes: Full, queen, king, Cal-king. Item #961461. **Warehouse only.**

I. Handmade Greeting Card Boxed Assortment

Features 25 exclusive cards in a reusable keepsake storage box; a card calendar/reminder organizer is included. These cards are crafted from fine heavyweight paper stocks, with high-quality embellishments, color-coordinated envelopes and appealing sentiments. Item #731553. **Warehouse only.**



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special events

New and exciting products available at warehouses for a limited time only

featured events

Look for (A) Vitamix blenders, (B) Naturally Knotty scarves, (C) Traeger pellet grills, (D) Tuzzi leather jackets and accessories and (E) Kontakt men's and women's apparel in warehouses during December. For an updated list of participating warehouses, go to Costco.com and search "vitamix6300," "naturallyknotty," "traegergrills44," "tuzzi44" and "cashmere44."

For previously featured events, search "collegiateapparel44" and "luckyclover44."



Click [here](#) for a list of special events by region.

ALASKA

Anchorage

Dec 13-24 Nordic clothing

IDAHO

Boise

Dec 13-24 Roma Designs jewelry

Dec 13-29 Sports apparel

Coeur d'Alene

Dec 13-24 Roma Designs jewelry

Nampa

Dec 6-15 Traeger pellet grills

MONTANA

Bozeman

Dec 13-22 Traeger pellet grills

Dec 13-29 Portable solar power

Helena

Dec 13-24 Portable solar power

Kalispell

Dec 6-15 Traeger pellet grills

Missoula

Dec 13-29 Sports apparel

OREGON

Albany

Dec 13-29 Sports apparel

Bend

Dec 6-15 Bamboo bedding and towels

Dec 12-24 Nordic clothing

Dec 13-29 Sports apparel

Clackamas

Dec 13-22 Massage chairs

Dec 13-22 Traeger pellet grills

Dec 13-29 Sports apparel

Hillsboro

Dec 13-24 Gunter Wilhelm cutlery

Portland

Dec 6-15 Portable solar power

Dec 6-15 Tuzzi leather jackets and accessories

Dec 13-22 Traeger pellet grills

Dec 26-29 Gunter Wilhelm cutlery

Roseburg

Dec 13-24 Portable solar power

Tigard

Dec 13-24 Men's suits and outerwear

Dec 13-24 Portable solar power

Dec 13-24 Professional cookware

Wilsonville

Dec 11-26 Nordic clothing

UTAH

Lehi

Dec 13-24 Portable solar power

Murray

Dec 13-24 Portable solar power

Ogden

Dec 13-24 Portable solar power

Orem

Dec 13-24 Portable solar power

Dec 18-22 Skate gear

Salt Lake City

Dec 12-24 Skate gear

Dec 13-24 Portable solar power

Dec 20-29 Tuzzi leather jackets and accessories

Sandy

Dec 12-24 Nordic clothing

Dec 13-29 Sports apparel

Spanish Fork

Dec 6-15 Portable solar power

West Bountiful

Dec 13-22 Traeger pellet grills

WASHINGTON

Aurora Village

Dec 6-15 Little Giant ladders

Dec 11-26 Nordic clothing

Dec 13-24 Professional cookware

Bellingham

Dec 13-22 Traeger pellet grills

Burlington

Dec 11-24 Nordic clothing

Dec 13-24 Kicker home audio

Dec 13-24 Portable solar power

Clarkston

Dec 6-15 Traeger pellet grills

Covington

Dec 5-8 Gunter Wilhelm cutlery

Dec 6-15 Little Giant ladders

Dec 13-22 Traeger pellet grills

East Wenatchee

Dec 13-24 Portable solar power

Everett

Dec 6-15 Traeger pellet grills

Dec 13-24 Kicker home audio

Dec 13-29 Sports apparel

Dec 20-29 Bamboo bedding and towels

Gig Harbor

Dec 6-15 Traeger pellet grills

Dec 19-22 Gunter Wilhelm cutlery

Issaquah

Dec 13-24 Jewelry to Your Doorstep (JTYDS) jewelry

Dec 13-24 Men's and women's Italian apparel

Dec 13-29 Sports apparel

Kennewick

Dec 13-22 Traeger pellet grills

Dec 13-29 Sports apparel

Kirkland

Dec 6-15 Traeger pellet grills

Dec 13-24 Men's and women's

Italian apparel

Dec 13-29 Sports apparel

Lacey

Dec 13-22 Massage chairs

Marysville

Dec 11-26 Nordic clothing

Puyallup

Dec 13-22 Traeger pellet grills

Seattle

Dec 12-24 JTYDS jewelry

Dec 13-22 Traeger pellet grills

Dec 13-24 Nordic clothing

Sequim

Dec 12-24 Nordic clothing

Silverdale

Dec 12-15 Gunter Wilhelm cutlery

Dec 12-24 Nordic clothing

Spokane

Dec 12-24 Nordic clothing

Dec 13-29 Sports apparel

Tacoma

Dec 6-15 Traeger pellet grills

Tukwila

Dec 6-15 Professional cookware

Dec 13-24 Roma Designs jewelry

Tumwater

Dec 6-15 Traeger pellet grills

Dec 13-24 Portable solar power

Union Gap

Dec 13-22 Traeger pellet grills

Vancouver

Dec 13-22 Traeger pellet grills

Woodinville

Dec 13-24 Bamboo bedding and towels

Dates and events are subject to change. Special Events for other regions may be found on Costco.com; type "special events" into the search box.

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Missoula

OREGON

Albany

Aloha

Bend

Clackamas

Eugene

Hillsboro

Medford

Portland

Roseburg

Salem

Tigard

Warrenton

Wilsonville

UTAH (NORTHWEST REGION)

Lehi

Murray

Ogden

Orem

St. George

Salt Lake City

Sandy

Spanish Fork

West Bountiful

West Valley

WASHINGTON

Aurora Village

Bellingham

Burlington

Clarkston

Covington

East Wenatchee

Everett

Federal Way

Fife Business Center

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Issaquah

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Tumwater

Union Gap

Vancouver

E Vancouver

Woodinville

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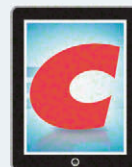
A dream made real

IN 2006, KELLIE O'BRIEN and her daughter, Heather, traveled to Africa to volunteer at a convent in Sanya Ju, Tanzania. With so much hardship around them, they felt impelled to give away much of the clothing and money they had with them. At the end of the day, however, they knew they had not made a lasting difference. When they asked how they could, the sisters told them about a Maasai man named Gabriel who had come to the convent for the last five years, asking for a school. Even then, Kellie O'Brien knew that her life was about to change. By the time she and her daughter left, they had already drawn designs for the first three classrooms on the back of an envelope.

Seven years later, the O'Brien School for the Maasai (www.obrienschool.org) stands as a testament to how one woman, with the aid of family, friends and anonymous well-wishers, can transform a village. It houses 10 classrooms (K–6), a library, a kitchen, a women's vocational center and a two-acre garden. In building the school, O'Brien also helped bring the village electricity, Wi-Fi, telephone poles and clean water, and, even more important, a dream.

"Our biggest hope is that the students, coming from one of the poorest villages, will recognize that they can become the next leaders of Tanzania, Africa and the world," O'Brien says. "Living in a dung hut does not determine who you can become in this world."

What inspires a 70-year-old to devote herself to an impoverished village more than 9,000 miles away from her home in Hinsdale, Illinois? "There comes a point where you go from success to significance," she says. "You want to give back." —*Fran R. Schumer*



KELLIE O'BRIEN

Tablet or smartphone?

Scan or click here to see more about the O'Brien School story. (See page 5 for scanning details.)

Students leaving O'Brien School at the end of the day with a new pair of shoes.

Project C.U.R.E.

"AS AN INTERNATIONAL economic consultant in developing countries, I was greatly moved by the seemingly endless trauma and need for better medical delivery systems and for individual medical help there," recalls James Jackson. "Millions of people die just for the lack of simple and inexpensive medical items and procedures. I wanted to do something that would be sustainable for the future."

In 1987, with the help of medical-industry friends, Jackson founded Colorado-based Project C.U.R.E (Commission on Urgent Relief and Equipment; www.projectcure.org), an organization that sends millions of dollars' worth of donated medical supplies and equipment to needy people in more than 130 developing countries, such as Mali, Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Brazil and DR Congo. It has received numerous awards, including a ranking by *Forbes* as one of the top 20 most efficient large U.S. charities.

The organization, heavily supported by volunteers, now has operations and warehouses in 17 U.S. cities. In addition to weekly deliveries of three semi-truck loads of donated medical supplies and equipment, the organization also sends C.U.R.E. Kits, boxes of essential medical supplies and equipment designed for short-term medical missions abroad, and C.U.R.E. Kits for Kids, shoebox-size boxes containing home healthcare supplies for parents of young children. C.U.R.E. clinics are an avenue for volunteer medical



James Jackson (right) presenting medical supplies to the minister of health and top doctors in Accra, Ghana.

PROJECT C.U.R.E.

professionals to travel to and assist in developing countries.

"For a strong and healthy economy in a developing country, you must have healthy people. That was the part of my motivation that was not just emotional, but economics," explains Jackson.

—*Irene Middleman Thomas*

Providing hope

IT WAS 1985, in the Dominican Republic. Another baseball game was over, and professional baseball player Dave Valle, who had been playing catcher in a winter league game as he rehabbed an injured knee, was surrounded by eight boys as he left the stadium.

"I just figured they wanted my autograph," says Valle. He was wrong. They were begging for food. Distraught, Valle bought the boys, most of them shirtless and shoeless, grilled chicken from a woman selling food on the street corner. It's a moment that changed Valle's life. And as a result, it's changed the lives of thousands of women and children in the poverty-torn Dominican Republic.

"My wife and I made a commitment that night," Valle says. "If we ever had the ability to do something, we'd come back and help."

After researching methods that would provide the most impact, in 1994 Valle and his wife, Vicky, established Esperanza International (<http://esperanza.org>), a micro-finance program that gives small loans to the poorest of the poor in the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

Esperanza, which is Spanish for "hope," has given \$42 million in loans, often breaking the cycle of poverty. The money, which is raised from donations, now also goes to medical clinics, water purification and education. "The work Esperanza does is absolutely transformational in the lives of the people it is serving," says Kayla Villnow, a fundraiser for Esperanza.

The loans average \$220 and are given to people, mostly women, living in poverty. The money is used to start a small business, such as tailoring, or selling food or crafts on a street corner. Esperanza currently has 16,462 people working and paying off loans and has helped create 73,000 small businesses, 78 schools and 29 water purification systems.

"All of the things I accomplished in baseball don't even stand up to the things that are being accomplished by Esperanza," says Valle, who retired from the sport in 1996. "It's gone beyond my wildest dreams." —Gail Wood



Back row, left to right:
Dave Valle and Esperanza COO Alex Nunez, with some Dominican Republic fans of Esperanza International.

Lions and tigers and bears, and more!

IN RURAL COLORADO, on some 720 acres near Keenesburg, some 300 unlikely animals thrive—namely, lions, tigers, bears, wolves, mountain lions and leopards.

The Wild Animal Sanctuary (www.wildanimalsanctuary.org), open daily to the public year-round, is the oldest and largest nonprofit

sanctuary in the Western Hemisphere, dedicated to rescuing and rehabilitating captive exotic and endangered large carnivores. It has 21 large-acreage, species-specific habitats, observed by visitors from the Mile into the Wild elevated walkway.

Founder and executive director Pat Craig, who when he first started had no background in zoology or wildlife—"other than studying anything and everything I could about nutrition and medical needs of large carnivores"—has devoted his life to saving abused wild animals from all over the world. This state- and federally licensed zoological facility and 501(c)(3) nonprofit was originally started in 1980 on Craig's family farm when he was just 20. The sanctuary provides animals with expert care and rehabilitation, high-quality diets and enrichment such as vitamins, minerals and medicines, with

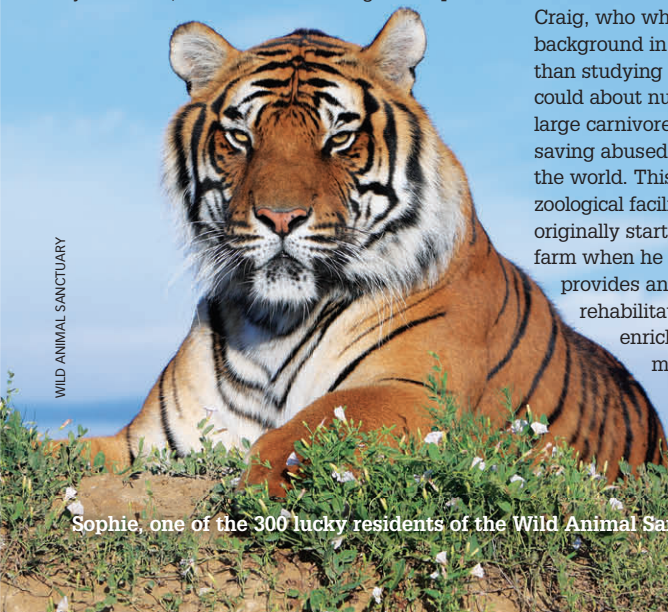
some 130 volunteers helping regular staff.

"Over 1,000 animals have come to the sanctuary, after law enforcement or animal welfare agencies discovered them being kept in private situations outside of the public zoo system, with many of them being confiscated from apartments, garages, basements, barns, circuses and other terrible places," says Craig.

According to Craig, "The United States Humane Society estimates there are up to 20,000 large exotic animals such as lions, tigers and bears being kept in private hands. In Texas alone, there are over 4,000 tigers living as 'pets' in private homes—more tigers than exist in the wild throughout the world, increasing due to hunting ranches." Untold numbers of animals suffer and die each year due to neglect or abuse, or because they are abandoned and left to die, starving and alone.

Local, state and national law enforcement agencies also depend on the sanctuary to help ensure public safety. "Every year, people get hurt or killed by captive wild animals that have not been properly housed, or because the people were allowed to be in unsafe situations by the animals' owners or keepers," adds Craig.—IMT

WILD ANIMAL SANCTUARY



Sophie, one of the 300 lucky residents of the Wild Animal Sanctuary.

COSTCO SERVICES

Update

To learn more about our complete suite of Costco services, click on the "Services" link at Costco.com or call toll-free 1-800-220-6000.

NEW GUIDE

Five year-end financial tasks

THE END OF the year is a good time to take stock of your finances and make any necessary changes. Start with these important tasks.

Protect your precious possessions. If your valuable items such as jewelry, art, electronics, collections, sports equipment, firearms or musical instruments are lost or stolen, will your homeowner's insurance cover your loss? Certain high-ticket items may require extra coverage.

Revise your payroll to reflect changes. The start of a new year may bring tax

changes or an updated employee roster as people join or leave your business.

Refinance your mortgage. It's quick and easy to find out if refinancing can save you money.

Guard against check fraud. Make sure your checks have the latest security features so only legitimate recipients can cash them.

Save on health and dental insurance. Do you have adequate health and dental insur-

ance? Can you find the same, or better, coverage for less money? It's a good time to check.

Costco Services can help you find excellent values on all of the above, plus information on building and protecting your wealth, tips to thwart identity thieves and more services to help improve your work and play life. See the new *MyCostco Services Guide*, available at Costco warehouses. You can also find it online at Costco.com; click on "Services."



RING IT ON

New name, same great service

ACCESSLINE, the longtime provider of digital business phones and equipment for Costco members, has been acquired by Intermedia, the world's largest one-stop shop for cloud IT services and the world's largest third-party provider of hosted Microsoft Exchange. The name may have changed, but one thing will stay the same: Intermedia will continue to provide world-class phones, service and value to Costco members.

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Great deals on new Cadillacs



TO SEE HOW you can get an amazing bargain on new Cadillac models through the Costco Auto Program, see What's New on page 101.

FIREPLACE SAFETY TIPS

Warm home, safe home

IS YOUR FIREPLACE giving you more worry than warmth this winter? Here are some tips from Ameriprise Auto & Home Insurance to avoid fireplace mishaps so you and your family can safely enjoy the comfort of a crackling fire this winter.

Chimney. Install a mesh screen cap over the top of the chimney. Call a certified chimney specialist to inspect and clean your chimney or wood stove annually.

Flue. Use a stovepipe thermometer to monitor flue temperature.

Air inlets. Air inlets should always be kept open.

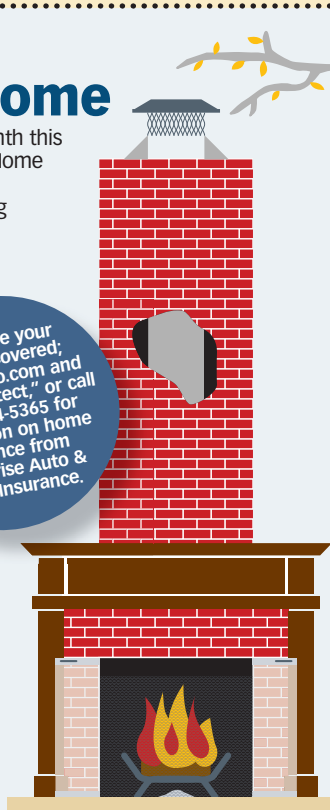
Mesh gates. When the glass doors are open, close the mesh screen. It will help keep embers from escaping.

Hearth. The hearth should be completely clear of any debris, decorations or clutter.

Ashes.

- Let ashes cool completely before removing them.
- If your fireplace doesn't have an ash pit connected to the hearth, keep ashes in a metal container a safe distance from your home—at least 10 feet.
- Pour water over the ashes before throwing them away.

To be sure your home is covered; Visit Costco.com and search "protect," or call 1-888-404-5365 for information on home insurance from Ameriprise Auto & Home Insurance.



Outside. Cut away any branches hanging above the chimney vent.

Doors. Open or closed? Depends. **Starting fire:**



OPEN—air helps start the fire.

During fire:



CLOSED—keeps fire contained and allows fan to heat your home.



OPEN—you can better enjoy the fireplace experience, but it requires more supervision.

Finishing fire:



CLOSED—helps keep air in the chimney from entering your home.

Other tips.

- Never leave a fire in the fireplace unattended.
- Always have a smoke alarm on every level of your home and a fire extinguisher nearby.
- Never burn trash or use accelerants in your fireplace.

Some restrictions apply. See "Services" at Costco.com for applicable terms and conditions. All services are provided by third parties, may not be available in all areas and are subject to change without notice.

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* Lender Fees include application, commitment, underwriting, processing fees or similar fees and DO NOT include 3rd party fees, such as title insurance, appraisal, tax service, escrow and other such fees in which the lender does not profit and are passed directly through to the borrower. All fees are clearly detailed in the Good Faith Estimate.

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